

A (Hi)story of Language and Being in the Bible

An Interpretation Based on Heidegger and Dürckheim

Third Edition

Antón Bousquet

Man's language certainly is one of the most important elements distinguishing him from the other creatures roaming the earth. According to Martin Heidegger, it is the "House of Being," man's home and what shapes his own nature. This metaphor is the starting point of the present work, which aims at telling the (hi)story of the relationship between man's language and his being, using the biblical narrative as a roadmap giving us a vision of the origin of language, of its evolution, and of its end. The biblical narrative here serves as a source for the creation of a "meta-narrative," that is, a new narrative that depicts the metaphysical world opened up by language: the (hi)story of man's relationship with the house of being.

Based on the description offered by the Bible, this meta-narrative tells how the House of Being comes to be built. It describes how this house becomes a village composed of scattered houses following the confusion of tongues at Babel; how the introduction of literacy radically transforms their dwellers' relation to their own temporality, and how the learning of a foreign language, which comes as a consequence of the Babylonian captivity, offers man the opportunity to appropriate a foreign house and leads him to a homecoming that unveils the nature of his home. Following the Pentecost, the village formed by all the houses becomes a city, as men begin to translate the scriptures into every language, that is, as exchanges occur between all the houses. Finally, the end of language and its relation with man's destiny is examined, in relation to the last days.

Rooted in the philosophy of Heidegger and the spirituality of Karfried graf von Dürckheim, this work proposes a new vision of the nature of language and of its role in man's destiny, one that uses the Bible as a guide but that is nonetheless not bound by its horizon.

About the author:



Antón Bousquet is an independent researcher specialized in the philosophy of language, the philosophy of religion, and comparative cultural studies. He holds a Master's degree in Linguistics from the University of Grenoble III in France and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Intercultural Studies from Fujen Catholic University in Taiwan. A former teacher of French as a foreign language, he has worked in different parts of Europe, the Middle-East, and Asia.

Printed by:



A (Hi)story of Language and Being in the Bible

An Interpretation Based on Heidegger and Dürckheim

Third Edition

Antón Bousquet
2018–2023

Copyright © 2018-2023 Antón Bousquet (Antoine Bousquet).

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN: 9781719885010 (Paperback)

Other books by the author:

The Walls of Things Around Us – Philosophical (Hi)story of Technology and Mindfulness of the Human Environment (2023)

The Tree of Life With Us – Origin and Evolution of Life, Philosophy of Nature, and Mindfulness of the Human Body (2022)

The Sky Beyond the Walls – A Chinese Philosophy of the Way (2021)

Between the Twilights – An Interlinear Translation of the Syriac Orthodox Breviary (2019)

The World of the Gauls – Foundation(s) of a Celtic Philosophy (2018)

The Man in the House of Being – A Story of Language and Being in the Bible (2018)

Printed by:



koadig.wordpress.com

Acknowledgment

My deepest gratitude goes to Dr. Christine Hsiu-Chin Chou, whose kindness, patience, and rigor guided me during the years I spent in the Ph.D. program of Comparative Literature and Cross-cultural Studies of Fugen Catholic University. The completion of the present work, based upon my dissertation, would not have been possible without her. I am also extremely thankful to Ms. Lisa Lin, Ms. Adeline Ou, and Ms. Gu Yushan for their assistance.

Table of Contents

Contents

Acknowledgment

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Abbreviations

Introduction	i
1 The way to the meta-narrative	1
1.1 The path of poetry	2
1.2 The need for a world close to earth and the experience of man's essential being	12
1.3 Bringing back the world to the earth: from <i>metaphor</i> to meta-narrative	22
1.4 The first <i>ek-stasis</i> : bringing the world to the world	27
1.4.1 <i>Lethe</i>	29
1.4.2 Emergence	33
1.4.3 The <i>ek-stasis</i> event and <i>a-letheia</i>	36
1.5 Tradition as a path toward essential being.	45
1.6 The nature of the biblical tradition	48

1.7	The (hi)story of language and being through the biblical tradition: from narrative to meta-narrative	50
2	The creation episode	57
2.1	The narrative of the creation episode	58
2.2	The meta-narrative of language in the creation episode	82
2.2.1	Language before Adam	83
2.2.2	Adam before language	90
2.2.3	The emergence of human language: building the house of being.	96
2.2.4	The essence of language	100
2.2.4.1	Language as signs.	101
2.2.4.2	Language as agreement	104
2.2.4.3	Language as dominion	107
2.2.4.4	Language as expression	110
2.2.4.5	Language as communication	115
2.2.4.6	Language as metaphysics	117
2.2.5	The house of being as a mirror: the birth of the <i>ego</i>	123
2.2.6	The first law	128
2.2.7	The first dialogue, the first temptation: the grounding of the altar	132
2.2.8	On the way toward death	137
2.2.9	The severance from the earth and the task of thinking	142
2.2.10	Unconcealment: being in the universe	147
2.2.10.1	The leap between earth and world	149
2.2.10.2	The bridging of earth and world	151
3	The Babel episode	157

CONTENTS

3.1	The narrative of the Babel episode	159
3.2	The meta-n. of language in the Babel episode . . .	168
3.2.1	Con-versation as a foundation of society and history	169
3.2.2	Tradition as a new facticity	172
3.2.3	The rise of the technique made possible by language	180
3.2.4	The building of the tower and of the world in the clouds	183
3.2.5	The descent of God and the blindness of man	190
3.2.6	The response	192
3.2.7	The confusion	194
3.2.8	Emergence: the village of tongues	199
3.2.9	Unconcealment: an encounter with the unintelligible	207
3.2.9.1	The encounter as experienced by the custodians	207
3.2.9.2	The encounter as experienced by the pioneers	217
3.2.9.3	Babel as an exile in preparation for a homecoming	218
4	The Sinai episode	221
4.1	The narrative of the Sinai episode	223
4.2	The meta-n. of language in the Sinai episode . . .	235
4.2.1	Language and orality	236
4.2.2	Peculiarities of an exclusively oral language	242
4.2.3	Oral language, oral law, and the path of thinking	248
4.2.4	Orality and <i>lethe</i>	254

4.2.5	The emergence of literacy	263
4.2.5.1	The earthly and heavenly nature of writing and literacy	263
4.2.5.2	<i>Poiesis</i> of the written sign	275
4.2.6	Emergence of the narrative within itself, as (hi)story and law	282
4.2.7	Unconcealment: being in time	283
4.2.7.1	The bridging of presence and non- presence	287
4.2.7.2	The leap between presence and non- presence	295
5	The Babylon episode	297
5.1	The narrative of the Babylon episode	298
5.2	The meta-narrative of language in the Babylon episode	314
5.2.1	The house of being before Babylon: a home	315
5.2.2	The <i>lethe</i> of the home	321
5.2.3	The emergence of the foreign	326
5.2.4	Two homes, two laws, one path	336
5.2.5	Unconcealment: Homecoming	340
5.2.5.1	Leap between house, leap between stat-ions	343
5.2.5.2	Bridging: throwing lines, building a bridge	347
5.2.5.2.1	Threshold line.	349
5.2.5.2.2	A line between two worlds	356
5.2.5.2.3	The tension between worlds and the search for ground	366

CONTENTS

5.2.5.2.4	Different peoples, different languages, but one Law and one path	379
6	The Pentecost episode	383
6.1	The narrative of the Pentecost episode	386
6.2	The meta-narrative of language in the Pentecost episode	394
6.2.1	Language before Pentecost	395
6.2.2	<i>Lethe</i> : the invisible line	399
6.2.3	Emergence: from line to bridges	401
6.2.3.1	The miracles: the wings of the Spirit	401
6.2.3.2	The third house, the third law . .	406
6.2.4	A new technique: from lines to bridges . . .	412
6.2.5	Carrying over the bridge: trans-lation . . .	417
6.2.6	Unconcealment: Ascent	423
6.2.6.1	The bridging of bridges, worlds, and laws	424
6.2.6.1.1	The clash of worlds . . .	436
6.2.6.1.2	The clash of laws	451
6.2.6.2	The leap between bridges, worlds, and laws	467
7	The End of Language	469
7.1	The narrative of the end of language	471
7.2	The meta-narrative of the end of language and being	474
7.2.1	The end of the city of being	475
7.2.2	The wall of silence	488
7.2.3	The beyond	497

CONTENTS

7.2.4	The great journey, the great experience (<i>Er- fahrung</i>)	504
7.2.5	Man's destin-ation: meta-noia	509
7.2.6	The two cities, the two trees	515
Conclusion		525
Bibliography		537

Table of Figures

The pictures found in the present book are either in the public domain or used under “fair use.” Those under copyright are shown in a smaller size in order to comply with “fair use” guidelines. They are not intended to be mere illustrations, but rather be the inspiration for poetic verses shown below them, which complete the prose narrative contained in the body of each chapter.

Fig. 1 *Φύσις and Τέχνη*.

Left side: Rockwell Kent, *World*. 1929. *The Prints of Rockwell Kent: Catalogue Raisonné*. Jones, Dan Burne. Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 2002: 192. Print; Right side: Rockwell Kent, *Machinery*, 1929. *The Prints of Rockwell Kent: Catalogue Raisonné*. Jones, Dan Burne. Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 2002: 189. Print.

Fig. 2 *Twilight*.

Rockwell Kent, *Twilight of man*. 1926. *The Prints of Rockwell Kent: Catalogue Raisonné*. Jones, Dan Burne. Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 2002: 8. Print.

Fig. 3 Droste effect.

Leys, Jos. Untitled. (based on *LW346* by M.C. Escher).

Fig. 4 *On the naked earth*.

Rockwell Kent, *Forest Pool*, 1927. *The Prints of Rockwell Kent: Catalogue Raisonné*. Jones, Dan Burne. Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 2002: 16. Print.

Fig. 5 *Building the house*.

Dolmen at Katapur, in: James Fergusson. *Rude Stone Monuments in All Countries: Their Age and Uses*. John Murray, 1872: 487. *Internet Archive*. Web. 10 Jan. 2017.

Fig. 6 *The strife of earth and world*.

Maria Arango Diener. *Yggdrasil*

Fig. 7 Communication model.

Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics*. Indiana University Press, 1976: 33.

Fig. 8 *The ego*.

Lynd Ward, in *Frankenstein*.

Fig. 9 *The village*.

Gwen Reverat. *Crossroads or Autumn*, 1936.

Fig. 10 *The young tree*.

Randal Birkey, *Woodcut Logo for Hewitt Associates*.

Fig. 11 *Tension and contrast*.

Assemblique. *Stonedead*

Fig. 12 Oral communication.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Cours de linguistique générale*.
Lausanne: Payot, 1985: 27.

Fig. 13 *The old tree*.

Jonathan Gibbs. *Woodcut Tree*

Fig. 14 Broken line.

Fig. 15 *By the river*.

Gustav Vigeland.

Fig. 16 The single line.

Fig. 17 From two to three houses in tension.

Fig. 18 From three to four houses in tension.

Fig. 19 *The bridge*.

Joshua Distler. *Deschutes Bridge*, 2006.

Fig. 20 The bridging of paradigms and the bridging of bridges.

Fig. 21 *The clash of worlds*.

Rockwell Kent, *Lunar disintegration*, 1937. *The Prints
of Rockwell Kent: Catalogue Raisonné*. Jones, Dan
Burne. Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 2002: 118. Print.

Fig. 22 The forces at play in the clash of worlds.

Fig. 23 Wave composition.

Murray Bourne. *Fourier Series interactive graph*, 2012.

Fig. 24 *The dance of Φύσις and Τέχνη*.

Left side: Rockwell Kent, *Flower, Sun and Waterfall*. (Date unknown). *The Prints of Rockwell Kent: Catalogue Raisonné*. Jones, Dan Burne. Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 2002: 169. Print; Right side: Rockwell Kent, *Machinery*, 1929. *The Prints of Rockwell Kent: Catalogue Raisonné*. Jones, Dan Burne. Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 2002: 189. Print.

Fig. 25 *Out of the shell*.

Colin See-Paynton. *Exaltation of larks* (cropped).

Fig. 26 *Standing on the wall*.

Rockwell Kent, *Girl on Cliff*, 1930. *The Prints of Rockwell Kent: Catalogue Raisonné*. Jones, Dan Burne. Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 2002: 59. Print.

Fig. 27 *Starlight*.

Rockwell Kent, *Starlight*, 1930. *The Prints of Rockwell Kent: Catalogue Raisonné*. Jones, Dan Burne. Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 2002: 54. Print.

Fig. 28 *Destin-ation*.

Rockwell Kent, *Flame*, 1928. *The Prints of Rockwell Kent: Catalogue Raisonné*. Jones, Dan Burne. Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 2002: 26. Print.

Fig. 29 *Surface tension*.

Author unknown. < <http://woodcuttingfool.blogspot.com/> >

Fig. 30 *The two trees.*

Jonathan Gibbs. *Two trees.*

Fig. 31 *The wave.*

Maggie Roth.

Table of Figures

Abbreviations

ESV: English Standard Version.

GA 2: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 2: Sein und Zeit (1927)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1977. Print.

GA 4: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 4 Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung (1936–1968)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1981. Print.

GA 5: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 5: Holzwege (1935–1946)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1977. Print.

GA 6.2: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 6.2: Nietzsche II (1939–1946)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1997. Print.

GA 7: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 7: Vorträge und Aufsätze (1936–1953)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2000. Print.

GA 9: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 9: Wegmarken (1919–*

- 1961). Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1976. Print.
- GA 10: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 10: Der Satz vom Grund (1955–1956)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1997. Print.
- GA 12: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 12: Unterwegs zur Sprache (1950–1959)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1985. Print.
- GA 16: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 16: Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges (1910–1976)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2000. Print.
- GA 22: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 2 Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie (Summer semester 1926)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1993. Print.
- GA 34: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 34: Vom Wesen der Wahrheit. Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet (Winter semester 1931/32)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1988. Print.
- GA 36–37: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 36–37: Sein und Wahrheit / 1. Die Grundfrage der Philosophie (Summer semester 1933), 2. Vom Wesen der Wahrheit (Winter semester 1933/34)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2001. Print.
- GA 39: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 39: Hölderlins Hymnen “Germanien” und “Der Rhein” (Winter semester 1934/35)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1980. Print.

- GA 41: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 41: Die Frage nach dem Ding. Zu Kants Lehre von den transzendentalen Grundsätzen (Winter semester 1935/36)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1984. Print.
- GA 45: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 45: Grundfragen der Philosophie. Ausgewählte “Probleme” der “Logik” (Winter semester 1937/38)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1984. Print.
- GA 46: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 46: Zur Auslegung von Nietzsches II. Unzeitgemässer Betrachtung (Winter semester 1938/39)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2003. Print.
- GA 52: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 52: Hölderlins Hymne “Andenken” (Winter semester 1941/42)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1982. Print.
- GA 53: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 53: Hölderlins Hymne “Der Ister” (Summer semester 1942)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1984
- GA 54: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 54: Parmenides (Winter semester 1942/43)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1982. Print.
- GA 55: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 55: Heraklit. 1. Der Anfang des abendländischen Denkens (Summer semester 1943) / 2. Logik. Heraklits Lehre vom Logos (Summer semester 1944)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1979. Print.
- GA 65: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 65:*

Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis) (1936–1938). Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1989. Print.

GA 66: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 66: Besinnung (1938/39)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1997. Print.

GA 69: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 69: Die Geschichte des Seyns*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1998. Print.

GA 73.1: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 73.1: Zum Ereignis-Denken*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2013. Print.

GA 77: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 77: Feldweg-Gespräche (1944/45)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1995. Print.

GA 78: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 78: Der Spruch des Anaximander (1946)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2010. Print.

GA 79: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 79: Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1994. Print.

GA 97: Heidegger, Martin. *Gesamtausgabe. IV. Abteilung: Hinweise und Aufzeichnungen Bd. 97: Anmerkungen I–V (Schwarze Hefte 1942–1948)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1994. Print.

HND: Hebrew verse numbering differs.

IBA: Illustration by the author.

Ibid.^o / Ibid.^t: When several references to the same book follow each other, the reference to the original language edition is designated as “Ibid.^o” and the translation as “Ibid.^t”

ONF: Original could not be found.

RSV-CE: Revised Standard Version — Catholic Edition.

TBA: Translation by the author.

Nb: Unless indicated otherwise, all quotes from the Bible are taken from the “Revised Standard Version (Catholic Edition) (RSV-CE).”

Introduction

It is only when man has learned to risk over and over again all that has seemed assured, that that which is forever unknowable breaks luminously upon him. Only then can Greater Life bestow on us its light as well as its darkness, only then can Divine Being enfold, renew and transform us.¹

— Karlfried Graf Dürckheim

Man always seems to have been seeking something that is not to be found on earth, something that would be more precious than gold, shinier than diamonds, a “thing” that his mind cannot really grasp but whose existence is yet seen as clear as the day. This “thing” has been called by various names: God, divine being, the One, among others. This search always begins from an experience of what is now called the “numinous,” a term popularized by Rudolf Otto that designates the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*,² the experience of a fearful and fascinating mystery, which can be found anywhere and yet often remains difficult to perceive: in the sound of leaves dancing with the wind, in the moonlight’s reflection on still waters, or the warmth of another person’s hand.

¹ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971: 81. Print; Original German: “Nur wo der Mensch das für ihn Feststehende immer wieder aufs Spiel setzt, kann das nie Feststellbare sich durchsetzen, kann das Leben uns in seinem Glanz und in seiner Finsternis berühren und das Sein erneuernd und verwandelnd in uns einschließen.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Der Alltag als Übung: vom Weg zur Verwandlung*. Bern: Hans Huber, 1962: 100. Print.

² See Otto, Rudolf. *Das Heilige, über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und Sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen*. N.p.:1922. Print.

Such experiences are often the subject of rationalizations and analyses. Man attempts to grasp them, to understand their meaning and make them fit his worldview. The result of this work is then passed on across time and space, to man's contemporaries and his descendants. It gradually becomes the subject of two different forces, one that solidifies this tradition, and one that transforms it according to the will of its recipients. Ultimately, the tradition, which finds its origin and meaning in the experience of the numinous, starts to lose its link to its source and it becomes something "assured," something that is distant and rigid, unrelated to our own experiences. There lies one of the dangers of all "religious traditions": they can undermine the very impulse that led to their genesis, that is, the search for the significance of the numinous, what Martin Heidegger called the "truth of being."³ The Indian philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti said that "the moment you follow someone you cease to follow Truth."⁴ If one receives a tradition without relating it to his own experience, without unceasingly seeking to refine and improve it, one forsakes its original meaning. A religious tradition is meaningful only when it is linked to the experience of the numinous that is available to all, if they open up to it.

Are traditions something that could be done away with? A stumbling block on the path of our search for the numinous? A positive answer would betray a failure to realize that traditions are the basis of man's world. Without traditions passed on by his forefathers, man would not be able to "make sense" of the universe surrounding him. He would not be able to talk, not know how to feed or clothe himself, and he would not be able to survive on his own. This is especially true concerning language, which is, according to Hans-Georg Gadamer, "not just one of man's possessions in the world; rather on it depends the fact that man has a *world* at all. The world as world exists for man as for no other creature that is in the world."⁵ The religious tradition is part of the linguistic

³ See Heidegger, Martin. *Pathmarks*. Cambridge University Press, 1998: 154. Print.

⁴ Secondary quote from: 久須本文雄。《禪語入門》。東京：大法輪閣，1982。N. Pag.; Originally in: Lutyens, Mary. *Krishnamurti: The years of awakening*. London: John Murray, 1975: 272–274. Print.

⁵ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2 Revised edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004: 440. Print; Original German: "Die Sprache ist nicht nur eine der Ausstattungen, die dem Menschen, der in der Welt ist,

tradition. It is the work of our ancestors, their world, which represents a rationalization of their collective search for the meaning of the numinous, the search for the essence of man's being.⁶ Without this tradition, very few would even begin to search for this essence, even though it constitutes, according to many specialists like Karlfried Graf von Dürckheim,⁷ the destiny of man. More than this, to discard the tradition would be to cut oneself off from the continuity and oneness of mankind, to sever the link that unites all the men who dwelt on this earth across the ages. To respect and pass

zukommt, sondern auf ihr beruht, und in ihr stellt sich dar, daß die Menschen überhaupt Welt haben. Für den Menschen ist die Welt als Welt da, wie sie für kein Lebendiges sonst Dasein hat, das auf der Welt ist." From: Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gesammelte Werke: Band 1: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. A. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010: 446–447. Print.

⁶ The word "world," as it will be used in the present work, will represent the space opened by a construction, a building, and also the "metaphysical" space opened by language, in contrast with the "earthly" phenomenon offered by the senses. It will, for the most part, correspond to the concept of "world" developed by Heidegger in one of his best articles: *The Origin of the Work of Art* (See Heidegger, Martin. *Heidegger: Off the Beaten Track*. Cambridge University Press, 2002: 27. Print; GA 5:35–36). It should nonetheless be noted that this conception of the "world" significantly differs from the one developed by the philosopher in his early work *Being and Time*, which is more widely known. Furthermore, Heidegger's *world* is also not to be seen as a Platonic metaphysical realm independent from the *earth*, as both are deeply intertwined: the earth needs the world to shine in the eyes of men but the world is built upon the earth.

⁷ Karlfried Graf von Dürckheim (1896–1988) was a German psychologist and Zen master. During his career as a diplomat during the Third Reich era, he was sent to Japan, where he spent several years discovering Japanese culture, and in particular the Zen tradition. After the war, he returned to Germany and began to tread what would become the path of the rest of his life: the practice of Zen. Dürckheim nonetheless did not live the life of a recluse, away from the world. He devoted his life to the sharing of his practice, through the publication of numerous books and the creation of therapies combining his knowledge of modern psychology with his Zen practice. His fascination for the richness of Zen did not lead him to a religious conversion, but rather only to a spiritual quest. He never became a Buddhist, and never distanced himself from the tradition in which he grew up, Christianity, even though many aspects of his thought may appear to contradict mainstream Christian theology. His teachings, which are neither strictly Christian nor Buddhist, foremost reflect a preoccupation for the destiny of man, and his spiritual development, as the search for his "essential being" (*das Wesen*). His work will occupy a central place in the present work, and it will be put in relation with another Bavarian thinker, whose teachings remarkably complements the ones of Dürckheim: the philosopher Martin Heidegger.

on one's cultural inheritance is a way to subjugate one's own *ego* to the wholeness of creation, to forget oneself and take one's place in the oneness of nature (Φύσις).

For almost two millennia, the Western world has been shaped by a particular tradition that replaced the myriad of others that preceded it across the lands of Europe, the Middle-East, and parts of Africa and West-Asia. The druids, sorcerers, shamans and heathen priests of yore slowly faded away to let place to the prophets, patriarchs, Levites and Messiah of the Biblical tradition. Even nowadays, a period that sees this tradition often vilified, its influence is still as deep as it is broad, permeating the languages, history, literature, and cultures of the entire globe. In modern times, this tradition has nonetheless been caught between two extreme approaches.

The first of these approaches is fideism, that is, the acceptance of the tradition as a revealed truth that cannot be questioned but rather only be followed. This is the point of view of the "believer," of the "faithful," whose task is to follow the path traced by the tradition, and to interpret it only when an obscure phrasing or terminology demands it. This represents an easy path for the men touched by the numinous, as it presents them with a clear-cut answer. It reveals "truth" without the need of a quest to find it. Without such a quest, however, the tradition is then fossilized and man stands still on the path toward his destiny. Instead of being seen as a sign, the experience of the numinous is seen as divine being itself. Man looks at the finger, without realizing that it points to the moon, and the moon thus remains unseen.

The second approach is historicism, which attempts to see the biblical tradition as the subject of scientific historical inquiry. While this approach rightfully recognizes the necessity to use the tradition as the basis for a search, its proponents have seldom been guided by the meaning of the experience of the numinous. Their endeavor often was to "debunk" the tradition as a mere myth that stands in the way of man's "enlightenment" through science and technique. This path is one that requires more intellectual skills and work than the first, but it is one whose aim is radically different, and even perhaps diametrically opposed to the search for the "truth of being." While the fideist mistakes the finger for what it points to, the historicist is only concerned with the origin of the

finger, trying to uncover deficiencies in its nature. His desire is to point out the errors of his forefathers, to show the falsehood of their representations, without considering what they intended to represent.

Fideism tends to see the biblical tradition as purely “heavenly,” a divine meta-physical creation that transcends space, time, and matter. Historicism, on the other hand, tends to see it as an “earthly” object, as a record of events that occurred in the physical world, in the past, and that is either true or false. Between these two extremes, modernism has given rise to a third way: one that sees the tradition as a series of allegories, which may be the source of some “universal truths,” lessons to guide the life of the modern man. Like historicism, this third way acknowledges the need for a search, and it may even touch on the question of the nature of the numinous. What leads it to a dead end, however, is that such “universal truths” are meant to form the basis of a universal ethics, perhaps even an anthropology, rather than to seek out the “truth of being” pointed out by the numinous.

The biblical tradition is a treasure handed out to mankind from the dawn of history, one that possesses a profoundly complex and delicate nature. Its prevalence in Western culture and its influence on its civilization has been so deep that men have often forgotten the impulse of the experience of the numinous from which it originates. As the German psychologist and teacher of the Zen tradition Karlfried Graf von Dürckheim said:

There is an urgent need to penetrate the Bible other than through scientific and rational exegesis. If God is the beyond, an external comprehension of the texts will never allow us to discover the real content, and it is better to be silent! We must enter upon the Way, unveil that which is hidden and become children of God, but nothing happens when we do it mentally or through some intellectual adherence! A living faith makes the believer listen to the mystery which speaks within.⁸

The Bible is work carved in language. It is inherently worldly, that is, meta-physical. This worldly nature is nonetheless not its only

⁸ Goettmann, Alphonse. *Dialogue on the Path of Initiation: An Introduction to the Life and Thought of Karlfried Graf Dürckheim*. New York: Globe Pr Books, 1991. N. pag. PDF.

dimension: it is also a sign pointing to both the heavenly and the earthly. The heavenly is the transcendence, what is beyond both earth and world, beyond our experience of the phenomenon offered by the senses and beyond what can be sheltered within language, what is outside time and space and cannot be grasped by man's *logos*. The earthly is the raw matter from which our body comes, and which allows us to experience the creation. It is what forms the foundation of man's existence, the physical universe that grows and changes like an organism, forming a whole that is the source of its own becoming, that is, nature as Φύσις [Phýsis]. In order to "listen to the mystery which speaks within," one needs to open oneself up to the three dimensions of the biblical tradition: earthly, worldly, and heavenly. This firstly means that this tradition must be experienced rather than studied. It must be felt rather than analyzed as an object. The links between the worldly narrative of the Bible and both the earth and the heavens must become visible. Only then can the tradition cease to become a barrier or a mirage preventing man's quest for the fulfillment of his destiny and his progress on the path toward the truth of being. As said by S^t Ephrem (A. D. 306 – 373):

ܠܠܗ ܡܢ ܩܕܡܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ
ܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ
ܠܠܗ ܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ
ܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܢ

Nature is before thy hand,
Scripture before thine eyes,
and nature is hard for us,
Scripture is easy for us.⁹

To find refuge in a revealed tradition instead of searching for man's essential being is easy. To abandon the tradition completely is even easier. The real challenge is to experience nature through the lens of tradition, without forsaking one's own point of view, that is, without letting oneself be transformed by the tradition, without becoming its prisoner. Thus approached, the text handed out through tradition can become our guide, and so, without the need for it to be "verified" or proofed for historical accuracy, as what matters is not the text itself, but rather the way it can trans-

⁹ Translation from: Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847: 323. Print; Original Syriac from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1961: 201. Print.

form us. As the French hermeneut Paul Ricoeur said: “the text is the mediation through which we understand ourselves.”¹⁰ This can be true of any text. The special nature of the biblical tradition only enhances the depth and range of this understanding. This nonetheless does not imply that the personal experience of the biblical tradition, through its link with the numinous and the earth, is *ego*-centric:

If it remains true that hermeneutics terminates in self-understanding, then the subjectivism of this proposition must be rectified by saying that to understand *oneself* is to understand oneself *in front of the text*. Consequently, what is appropriation from one point of view is disappropriation from another. To appropriate is to make what was alien become one’s own. What is appropriated is indeed the matter of the text. But the matter of the text becomes my own only if I disappropriate myself, in order to let the matter of the text be. So I exchange the *me*, *master* of itself, for the *self*, *disciple* of the text.¹¹

To “let the matter of the text be” is the starting point, what is needed to experience the biblical tradition as a key to essential being. The text is merely a sign, pointing out this essential being. To become a “disciple of the text” is, in the present case, only to enter the path, to go through the threshold of the gate that is the numinous. The French hermeneut argues that it ends with the understanding of the self. Indeed, but only if this imply the perception that one’s self is only a drop in the ocean that is being, that one is not only part of a whole, but rather that one *is* the

¹⁰ TBA. Original French: “le texte est la médiation par laquelle nous nous comprenons nous-même.” From: Ricoeur, Paul. *Essais d’hermeneutique Vol. 2, Du texte à l’action*. Paris: Points essais edition. Paris, 1998: 115. Print.

¹¹ Ricoeur, Paul, and Richard Kearney. *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II*. Trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 2007: 37. Print; Ibid.: 54; “s’il reste vrai que l’herméneutique s’achève dans la compréhension de soi, il faut rectifier le subjectivisme de cette proposition en disant que *se* comprendre, c’est *se* comprendre *devant* le texte. Dès lors, ce qui est appropriation d’un point de vue est désappropriation d’un autre point de vue. Approprier, c’est faire que ce qui était étranger devient propre. Ce qui est approprié, c’est bien la chose du texte. Mais la chose du texte ne devient mon propre que si je me désapproprie de moi-même, pour laisser être la chose du texte. Alors j’échange le *moi*. *maître* de lui-même, contre le *soi*, *disciple* du texte”

whole. To become a disciple of the text then means to enter it wholeheartedly, relinquishing one's *ego* to take one's place within the universe of the narrative and to accomplish the destiny that it gives us: to consciously walk the path toward our essential being.

The relation between the text, any text, and the search for man's essential being is nevertheless not easily seen. One first needs to realize that texts are manifestations of language, and one then needs to comprehend the fact that language is not only what allows us to have a world, as Gadamer said: it is also what allows us to *be*, as the only creatures that can seek what is pointed out by the experiences of the numinous, and walk on the path toward divine being. It is because man is the ζῷον λόγον ἔχον [*zôon lógon échon*],¹² the animal with the *logos*, that he can investigate what lies beyond the range of his sensory, earthly experiences. Here, however, do the insights of our time show their value. The German philosopher Martin Heidegger,¹³ who dedicated most of his life to the question of the relation between language and being, showed that we do not *have* a language; that it is not an object that we can use and master. Our relation to language is rather one of mutual enslavement: language controls us as much as we control it. We shape it as much as it shapes us: our thought, our culture, and our life. To become a disciple of the text thus means to cease to treat language as a servant and to enter into a dialogue with it, that is, to tone down the *ego* and listen to what *language* says, the language that is beyond the text.

Here can we realize the fact that the biblical narrative is more

¹² Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*. Indiana University Press, 2009: 76. Print.

¹³ Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) was a German philosopher, who devoted his life to the question of the essence of man's being. Although he is mostly known for one of his first publication, *Being and Time* (1927), his thought took a radical turn following this book, and he then endeavored to refound the thinking of being upon a new basis, rejecting the “metaphysical” world of philosophy to find back the inceptual impulse at its origin, in the very beginning of this world: in the thought of some of the pre-Socratics, such as Heraclitus, Anaximander, and Parmenides. The poetic and ambiguous words of these first “philosophers” became to him a source for the rediscovery of the essence of thinking, which is to be found in the creation of poetry. This “poetry” is nonetheless not to be understood as beautiful verses, but rather as the establishment of a link between a thinking man and the universe into which he is thrown. Together with the work of Dürckheim, the work of Heidegger will be one of the foundation stones of the present work.

than a simple work of language, more than an ore that can be used to refine our knowledge of the creation: the Bible is carved in language but it also tells us *of* language, not only as text but also within its narrative. It recounts the (hi)story of the language of its universe, from its beginning until its end. It tells us of its origin and growth, of the budding and withering of its branches, but more importantly, it can tell us concerning its purpose and concerning its place in man's destiny. The (hi)story of language represents the roadmap of man's progress on the path toward his essential being. To become a disciple of this particular text can thus have a special significance: to experience the (hi)story of language is to enter the path of thinking, the path toward essential being, beginning one's *search*, which is more than a mere reception. This (hi)story may not be history, but it can be more than a story. When it is seen as neither an unquestioned, revealed truth nor as a myth, man can decide to become a disciple of this (hi)story, to learn about the nature of his self, but more importantly, also learn about the destiny of the whole of which this self is an integral part, and learn to become an organ through which divine being can flow.

The (hi)story of language and being in the biblical tradition is nonetheless not one that is clearly shown on the surface of the text. It becomes only visible to the disciple, to the one who is resolute to enter and to experience the universe of the narrative. The (hi)story of language and being is concealed by its earthly focus, as the (hi)story of men, of their lands and their deeds, but not directly as the (hi)story of their world, of the way they organize the universe into a set of structures and "things." The narrative represents the story of the physical universe, of the *earth* and the *skies*, and of the men between them. The (hi)story of language, on the other hand, is located on another plane: it is the story of the *world*, of the meta-physical, what is neither the earth nor the skies, and yet rests on them both, and is intertwined with both. This story must be extracted from the raw matter that is the narrative in order to unveil the meta-narrative that it conceals.

This meta-narrative could be told in a purely *technical* way, using linguistics and the traditional philosophy of language to analyze the vision of language that the narrative gives us, that is, what is the language of the biblical universe. It would, however, greatly diminish its value, which foremost is to reveal the role of language in man's being. This relation between language and being is one

that must be felt and **experienced** rather than analyzed and described. Therefore, the meta-narrative of language and being must be “brought back to the earth,” and not remain disconnected from it, purely meta-physical. The starting point of this return to the earth will be a simple *meta-phor*, that is, a carrying across different realms¹⁴: Heidegger’s insight that language represents the “house of being,” (*das Haus des Seins*¹⁵) man’s meta-physical dwelling. More than a mere “poetic imagery,” this metaphor encapsulates the idea that language is not a tool that we use to “translate” our thoughts but rather what allows us to *be*, as ontological creatures distinct from the others that fill the earth and the skies. Starting from what may appear to be nothing more than an insignificant metaphor, the entire meta-narrative can be unveiled: not as a purely abstract set of meta-physical constructions, but rather as the story of the building and evolution of the first “house of being,” which was first built and dwelt in by Adam but which was

¹⁴ Note concerning the use of hyphenation in the present work: The purpose of the insertion of hyphens in compound words is primarily to highlight their origin, and to show that these words are the result of the conflation of two or more concepts. The work of time indeed has a tendency to erode the separation between these words: it first transforms two separated words into a single hyphenated word, and progressively this separation becomes completely blurred, often completely masking its origin. For example, it would be virtually impossible for someone to guess that the name of the French city of *Lyon* originally comes from the Gaulish *Lug dunum*, meaning the “fortress of [the god] Lugus.” The voluntary insertion of hyphens aims at counteracting the effect of this erosion, emphasizing the original and literal meaning of the words joined by the hyphen. Heidegger is one of the pioneers of this practice among modern philosophers, the most famous example being the hyphenation of the word *Dasein*, which is a common German word that is often translated as “existence,” but whose origin, *Da-sein*, literally means being-there. This simple emphasis became one of the starting points of his philosophy, and during all his life he persisted in using hyphenation as a way to highlight the richness of the traditions concealed in the languages spoken across the earth, and especially his mother tongue. This process can nonetheless also be seen as a movement of distancing from the abstract, the overly metaphysical, and as a return to the simplicity found in these compound words, which are often more “down to earth.” Even though it may be less familiar to us, the word “being-there” is closer to our natural intuition and our senses than the word “existence,” whose etymology and origin are concealed unless one especially searches for them. Such hyphenations therefore represent a powerful and yet simple way to unveil and point out something in these familiar words that has been forgotten by most, precisely because they are too familiar.

¹⁵ Heidegger, Martin, and David Farrell Krell. *Basic Writings*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993: 217. Print. (Letter on humanism); Original German: GA 9: 313.

later also shaped and extended by his descendants, progressively transforming it into a village and even a city. It can thus be experienced in its relation to our earthly life, rather than simply be contemplated as a set of abstract concepts.

The present work will represent the **uncovering of a meta-narrative of language and being from the biblical narrative, letting the story of the “house of being” be told, so as to reveal firstly how the Deity guides man’s walk on the path toward his essential being by initiating a series of transformations of his house of being, and secondly reveal man’s destin-ation.** It will be seen through the lens of the earthly experience of the phenomenon (Φύσις) and the lens of the worldly, scientific knowledge (Τέχνη), as both are necessary in order to unveil what lies beyond earth and world, that is, what the numinous is always pointing at: the “essential being” (*Wesen*¹⁶) of Dürckheim, the “beyng” (*Seyn*) of Heidegger.

The meta-narrative that will be uncovered in the present work will show language as a vehicle driven by the Deity, a vehicle that carries man through six different “stations” that represent different steps on the path toward his destiny. Each one of these stations can be seen as a way through which man comes to perceive the nature of his facticity, the nature of the world into which he is thrown. As a fish that only comes to realize what water is once he is taken out of it, man is given an opportunity to perceive new portions of his world at each one of these stations. Not all men will seize these opportunities, but these “*ek-stases*,”¹⁷ that is, the series of extractions from something too familiar to be seen, will form the backbone of man’s path toward his essential being and the way through which he can redeem his fallen nature. Each *ek-stasis* will represent a call for the conversion of mankind so that he will perceive his true nature and become what he is meant to

¹⁶ The German word *Wesen* is difficult to translate into English, as it possesses a wide range of meanings in German. For the present work, it would suffice to mention that it here conflates the notion of “essence” and the notion of “being,” explaining why it has been translated as “essential being” in the following translation of one of Dürckheim’s most famous book: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971. Print.

¹⁷ The Greek word ἑκ-στασις can be literally interpreted as “the action of standing outside of something.” This word usually designates a “displacement,” but it also is the source of the English concept of “ecstasy.”

be.

The telling of the meta-narrative should nevertheless not be seen as a work of “biblical hermeneutics” in the classical sense of the term. Indeed, the meaning of the biblical narrative will not be here considered an aim but rather only as a means. The Bible will be seen as a source of raw material, passed on to us as our inheritance, which can be refined in order to unconceal our own relation to being and to the divine. The (hi)story of language and being that it will reveal can constitute a small beacon on the path of our appropriation of being and the divine, one that is neither a “revealed truth” nor a “scientific inquiry,” but rather the fruit of an inquiry of being rooted in tradition. It will acknowledge the tradition, not as a prison limiting the range of our quest but rather as the ground upon which we can contribute to the edification of what we received as an inheritance from our ancestors. The products of modern scholarship will be used, but they will not be considered as inherently superior to tradition.

As Dürckheim tells us: “The sound of Being resonates all the time! We must learn how to hear this sound.”¹⁸ The biblical narrative is a voice from the past, one that can echo in the heart of every man walking his way on the path of transformation, on the path of beyng. The meta-narrative itself represents a map of this path, *a* map and not *the* map. Why look at this path, walked by the men of the narrative, rather than the one we are walking on now, one may ask. It is precisely because we do not stand on this path that it is worthy of being looked upon: only from a distance may we clearly see it, in its fullness, without the interference caused by our own presence. Only from the point of view of a “revealed narrative” can we be able to look at (hi)story in its entirety, as something whole and unmoving. The narrative offers us an occasion to peer at such a thing, to hear a (hi)story of being, something that transcends our presence and points toward that which cannot be grasped but rather only experienced.

The following (hi)story of language and being in the biblical narrative will, for the most part, follow the linear structure of the Bible, which approximately follows the timeline of the narrative’s

¹⁸ Goettmann, Alphonse. *Dialogue on the Path of Initiation: An Introduction to the Life and Thought of Karlfried Graf Dürckheim*. New York: Globe Pr Books, 1991. N. pag. PDF.

universe, from its creation until the end of days. After a preliminary chapter exposing the origin, the purpose, and the entryway to the meta-narrative (Ch. 1), the meta-narrative itself will be unfolded, starting from the first mention of language in the Genesis narrative and ending with the last one, found in the Apocalypse (Ch. 2–7). This work will comprise seven chapters, which, starting from the second one, will each correspond to a new stat-ion of language and a new *ek-stasis* in the world of the narrative. These seven chapters can be succinctly outlined as follows:

- *1 — The way to the meta-narrative:* The first chapter will show the genesis of the meta-narrative, which does not begin in the narrative itself but rather in the work of the pathfinders who cleared the way toward its door. The (hi)story of language and being is indeed not clearly visible to an unprepared reader of the biblical text. This (hi)story is a narrative concealed in the narrative, and its key must first be discovered before it can be unlocked. In order to become the source of an experience rather than merely be read as a metaphysical discourse, the meta-narrative has to be told in the language of poetry, the one of Heidegger and Hölderlin, which is close to the earth, but this language must first be learned by those to whom the earthly has become unfamiliar or foreign. Furthermore, it is also something that must be experienced rather than read, implying that one therefore has to nurture his ability to put worldly knowledge in relation with earthly experiences prior to beginning the exploration of this (hi)story. For this task, the work of Dürckheim will be our guide. The *poiesis* of Heidegger and the *meta-phor* inspired by Dürckheim are nonetheless only prerequisites allowing man to approach the threshold of the meta-narrative. Its door will only be unlocked when man experiences his first *ek-stasis*, as the breaking of a blindness (λήθη / *lethe*) to what is too familiar and pervasive to be perceived. This last key is one that is directly handed to us by the German philosopher: the unconcealment of our world; of our facticity; of the fact that we are thrown into language, which is the house of our being. By representing the house of being within itself, and showing it to us, Heidegger offers us the opportunity of an *ek-stasis*, revealing the nature of our world. Through this revelation, the doorway

to the (hi)story of language and being in the narrative opens up. We are first given a possibility not only to see our world as such but also to experience it rather than to merely live blind inside it. We are also thereby given the possibility to experience another world: the one of the narrative, which forms a narrative within the universe of the narrative. The exploration of this world and the unfolding of its (hi)story can then begin.

- *2 — The creation of language:* The emergence of language marks the beginning of man's being as a human, distinct from the language-less animals. Language allows a world to appear beyond the physical: the meta-physical, a creation sealed by a covenant between God and Adam, establishing the names of the earthly creatures. In the meta-narrative, this marks the beginning of the building of the house of being that man will now inhabit. This emergence of language is mainly described in the first three chapters of the book of Genesis.
- *3 — The confusions of tongues:* As a consequence of the construction of the tower of Babel, the descendants of Noah are divided into seventy-two groups, each speaking a different language. In the meta-narrative, this implies that the house of being is now transformed into a village, composed of seventy-two different houses. Following this event, each group will face something new: the unintelligible. Indeed, until then, all human speech was intelligible to everyone, but the confusion of tongues marks the appearance of the unfamiliar, of the unknown, something that will change man's relation to language. Man may perceive the existence of the other houses of the village but he cannot enter them yet. The narrative concerning the confusion of tongues is mainly located in the eleventh chapter of Genesis.
- *4 — The Sinaitic revelation:* The arrival to Mount Sinai, following the Exodus of the Hebrews, coincides with the advent of the written word in the narrative. Through this event, combined with the handing down of the Torah to Moses, a transition from an exclusively oral world to one in which writing has a prominent place is initiated. In the meta-narrative, this implies a series of profound modifications of the archi-

texture of the houses of being, and it changes the way its inhabitants are affected by the work of time, thereby also changing their relation to time itself. This part will be based on the several mentions of writing that are scattered in the second half of the book of Exodus (from chapter 20 to 40).

- 5 — *The Babylonian exile*: The Babylonian captivity marks the beginning of a religious diglossia among the Jews: the Hebrew language, the sacralized language of the Torah, becomes a second language as their mother tongue gradually becomes Aramaic. This event, in the narrative, concerns only the Hebrews, but it also symbolizes something shared by all the other peoples: the alienation from the home, from the language of Adam that was once the native language of all the descendants of Adam, but which now becomes foreign, and requires a conscious effort in order to be re-appropriated. With this new stat-ion of the meta-narrative, man now experiences the possibility to travel to another house of being and to make it a new home. He then has to reconsider his relationship with his home and with the foreign. For this chapter, the texts to be analyzed will cover references to language in three books: the second book of Kings for the pre-captivity period (2 Ki 18, mainly), scattered references in the book of Daniel for the captivity period, and finally the book of Ezra for the post-captivity period.
- 6 — *The Pentecost*: With the Pentecost, the Old Covenant is superseded by the New: all the peoples filling the earth are united through a common law and a common revelation that transcends linguistic boundaries. The Bible, which itself appears within the narrative, is formed following this event, as a book written in three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek), but whose message will be preached in all languages, to all nations. This part of the narrative recounts the transition from a world composed of isolated peoples, speaking different languages, to a world that transcends the limits of individual languages. On the meta-narrative level, this marks the beginning of the transformation of the village into a city, as all the houses of being enter in relation with one another. The revealed law, the biblical text itself, forms a Sanctuary, central point of the city, which is split into three different houses and is brought, through translation, to the

four corners of the city. This event will become the source of a clash of tongues, arising from the tension between the fact that all men share a common revelation and the fact that they nonetheless still speak different languages. This final part will be based on the account of the Jewish Pentecost described in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and the account of the Pentecost of the Gentiles found in the tenth chapter of the same book.

- 7 — *The Apocalypse*: The last chapter will be dedicated to the place of language in the last days, as described by the narrative, and to the teleology of language. The destiny of the city of being will be discussed, to see its ultimate purpose and the role it plays in man's destiny, for each man as an individual and for mankind as a whole. Contrary to the other parts of the narrative, the text is here mostly silent concerning the end of language. Only a few allusions to language are to be found in the prophetic parts of the Bible, the Apocalypse in particular, and thus the meta-narrative will mainly be based on an interpolation between the previous chapter and the ultimate end of language in the narrative, which is revealed in silence.

Each one of the chapters forming the meta-narrative (Ch. 2–7) will be composed of two parts. The first will be dedicated to an examination of the text of the narrative and to its exegesis according to the tradition of the Church. It will be focused on language but it will also sometimes examine the broader context of the narrative, and in particular the development of man's relationship with being, such as man's creation or his fall from Eden, for example. Following this, the second part will uncover the meta-narrative of language and being, telling the (hi)story of the world of the biblical universe, from the beginning of the construction of the first house of being until its transformation into a city, observing man's relationship with his dwelling(s) and how this relationship paves the way for the fulfillment of his destiny, if he is willing to seize the opportunities offered to him. The narrative brought to light in the first part will provide an earthly anchor, in the phenomenon described by the text, so that a "meta-discourse" can then be developed in the second part, using the meta-physical, philosophical, or linguistic tools discovered by modern scholarly thought. This

meta-discourse will then be the subject of a *meta-phor*, bringing it back to the earth in the form of the (hi)story of the house of being, so that it can be experienced rather than remain purely metaphysical, and thereby also become part of our experience of our essential being.

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Mar 4:9)

Chapter 1

The way to the meta-narrative

ܠܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ
ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ
ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ

In the faith as in a ship go
down to His Scriptures as a
sailor to the port.

— Saint Ephrem, *Hymns on Faith*¹

As the Syrian poet tells us, the biblical narrative is a ship, and those who wish to enter it are as sailors. The ship is useless if its sailors have no knowledge of navigation, or if it has no destination. Before a man can become a sailor, he must have received the teaching of a master, who himself was taught by others, forming a continuous chain linking him to the pioneers of seafaring and navigation. The Scriptures are the ship, but the ship is only a means to an end. The sailor does not want to look at the ship itself, but rather wants it to bring him to the high seas, so that he can fill himself with visions of remote lands that he could never have

¹ Translation from: Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847: 331. Print; Original Syriac from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1961: 213. Print; It can be remarked that a port, in Syriac, is called the “House of Ships!” (ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ).

reached without it. The meta-narrative is one of these remote and exotic lands, whose sight will here be sought.

Before beholding the remote land, one must nonetheless first learn the nature of the ship, the nature of the materials it is made of, the way it is used to navigate, and the art of navigation itself. Before one can experience the meta-narrative, one must first be able to see it, something that requires that one first appropriate the language in which it can be told. The meta-narrative is indeed not meant to be merely heard but also to be felt in one's senses, that is, to lead to an experience of the house of being as man's dwelling, his inheritance, rather than as a mere tool for communication. It therefore cannot be told in the language of the Τέχνη [Téchnē], that is, as the product of man's *logos* rather than the fruit of an experience of the creation, and it is vain if it is only read or heard as a mere metaphysical discourse. It must be whispered close to the earth rather than loudly proclaimed in the clouds. It must be told in the language that is near the origin, near the foundation of language. This is the language of the poets, which will give us a first part of the key unlocking the door toward the (hi)story of language and being in the biblical narrative.

1.1 The path of poetry

The history of human thought can be seen as a movement of world exploration. It began as an upward movement starting from the surface of the world, that is, the parts of it that remained close to the earth, works of language that are “metaphysical” but close to the concrete and tangible experiences felt and shared by mankind. The narrative can be seen as one of such primordial works, one that tells us of the earth and the heavens, in a rather direct and “down-to-earth” manner. This upward movement slowly progressed toward an increasingly higher knowledge of the metaphysical. Through this movement, the world is seen as a picture, whose fineness becomes greater with time, but it also induces a distancing from the root of the world, the source of language from which the world itself came to be, that is, the earth. Left untamed, this movement also alienates man from the heavenly, and in particular from the experience of the numinous. This alienation comes to pass when man loses sight of the purpose of the world and of how

all the “things” of this world came to be.

In order for things to *be*, they must indeed first be brought forth to language, to the world, in a process described by Aristotle as *poiesis* (ποίησις): “Every occasion for whatever passes over and goes forward into presencing from that which is not presencing is *poiesis*, is bringing forth [Her-vor-bringen].”² The Greek word *poiesis*, from which the word “poetry” originates, designates the bringing-forth of poetic compositions and of all types of artworks. It also includes the work of the craftsman, which is usually perceived as “technical.” *Poiesis* is the fundamental way by which things are brought forth to the world and by which man expresses himself in it, pouring out his will in *poetry*, the product of a *poiesis*. For Heidegger, however, *poiesis* has been increasingly replaced by pure *Technik*, a word not only to be seen as mere technology, as many have translated this term in English, but rather as the illusion that the universe can be understood as a machine and that mathematical tools alone would allow man to understand *nature* (as Φύσις³). With a *poiesis*, what is brought forth by the will of man is the result of the encounter between the earth and the world: the physical, the natural on the one hand and the meta-physical *logos* on the other. Modern *Technik*, to which biblical hermeneutics can be seen to belong, on the other hand, is the source of its own perpetuation: man no longer knows the purpose of what is brought forth, and the “progress” of the technique becomes its own motivation. This causes man to lose sight of the earth and to see it as a mere source of material that can be used for the development of the technique. His meta-physical, technical representation of the universe then seems to prevail over nature itself.

For the German thinker, man must return to the primal experience of *poiesis*, uncontaminated by an all-powerful technique, so as to free himself and be able to truly be the person he is des-

² Secondary translation from Heidegger’s, in: Heidegger, Martin. *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*. Garland Pub., 1977: 10. Print; Original Greek: “οἷσθ’ ὅτι ποιήσις ἐστὶ τι πολὺ: ἡ γάρ τοι ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς τὸ ὄν ἰόντι ὁφθαλμοῦν αἰτία πᾶσα ἐστὶ ποίησις, ὥστε καὶ αἱ ὑπὸ πάσαις ταῖς τέχναις ἐργασίαι ποιήσεις εἰσὶ καὶ οἱ τούτων δημιουργοὶ πάντες ποιηταί.” From: Aristotle. “Symposium 205b-c.” *Perseus*, 23 Sept. 2015.

³ In modern philosophy, the so-called “analytic” tradition can be seen as spearheading the advocacy of the reign of the *Technik*, whereas the “continental” tradition often expressed criticism of the way modern men have let themselves be led by it rather than to put it at the service of mankind.

timed to be: a man who is close to the truth of being; who is a neighbor of truth. To do so first implies a distancing of himself from the most pervasive element of the technique: its language. In order to emancipate man from a language caught in the grip of the technique, it may seem that “the simple must be wrested from the complex, measure must be opposed to excess. What supports and dominates beings as a whole must come into the open.”⁴ Such a task is nonetheless impossible, according to Heidegger: “What endures is never drawn from the transient. What is simple can never be directly derived from the complex. Measure does not lie in excess. We never find the ground in the abyss,”⁵ meaning that man must first reject the complex altogether in order to rediscover the simple. He must do away with the technical so as to find back the inceptual, that is, the poetical. The *Technik* has its origin in the *poiesis* but its degeneracy causes man to lose sight of the true nature of the poetic, which is to bring the earth and the heavens to the world, so that man can know them, that is, make sense of the earthly experience he has of them. For Heidegger, this diagnosis could be applied to modern culture as a whole but this can be seen as particularly true concerning the biblical tradition, which is not only severed from the earth by hermeneutics but also from the heavenly experience of the numinous, which can be seen at the source of all religious traditions. The return to an inceptual experience of the poetic is the first step on the way toward a rediscovery of the numinous, toward “a living faith,” which “makes the believer listen to the mystery which speaks within,”⁶ as Dürckheim said. It is also a necessary step for those who wish to see the ship of the Scriptures depart from the port and lead them to new territories; to see the meta-narrative beyond the narrative, and let it become the source of an experience. The perception of the meta-narrative requires an acute sense of the nature of the poetic,

⁴ Heidegger, Martin. *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*. Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 2000. Print. p 58 ; Original German: “das Einfache muß der Verwirrung abgerungen, das Maß dem Maßlosen vorgesetzt werden. Jenes muß ins Offene kommen, was das Seiende im Ganzen trägt und durchherrscht.” From: GA 4: 41.

⁵ Ibid.: 59; Original German: “Was bleibt, wird daher nie aus dem Vergänglichen geschöpft. Das Einfache läßt sich nie unmittelbar aus dem Verworrenen aufgreifen. Das Maß liegt nicht im Maßlosen. Den Grund finden wir nie im Abgrund.” From: GA 4: 41.

⁶ Goettmann, Alphonse. *The Path of Initiation*. N.p.: Theosis Books, 2009. N. Pag. Print.

as the poetic is the source of language, just as it is the source of the narrative. The appropriation of this source will then show the importance of not departing too far from it and the necessity to bring back what has been severed from it; to bring back what is too “meta-physical” back to the earth.

In his *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, the cornerstone of his new approach to the question of being, Heidegger describes poetry as “a founding by the word and in the word,”⁷ indicating that poetry is language, of course, but that it also mainly is the source of language, what makes language *be*. Even further than this:

The poet names . . . all things with respect to what they are. This naming does not merely come about when something already previously known is furnished with a name; rather, by speaking the essential word, the poet's naming first nominates the beings as what they are. Thus they become known as beings.⁸

The essence of poetry is to initiate the being of beings, through language. Such beings become what they are only through this *poiesis*, which makes them “things” that can be designated with words. Phenomenology, upon which Heidegger's early works partly originates, attempted to transcend the limits of meta-physical pre-conceptions by going “to the things themselves.” The poetic path that he followed after *Being and Time* nonetheless goes further: to what makes “things” *be*, as part of the man's world. Without *poiesis* and language, we would not be able to see the universe as composed of “things,” but would rather be like beasts whose behavior is ruled by instinctive reactions to sensory stimuli. The Τέχνη [Téchnē], when unbalanced with its counterpart the Φύσις [Phýsis], that is, the earth seen as what grows organically, continuously under the heavens rather than as a set of “things,” alienates

⁷ Heidegger, Martin. *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*. Amherst, N.Y: Humanity Books, 2000: 58. Print; Original German: “Dichtung ist Stiftung durch das Wort und im Wort.” From: GA 4: 41.

⁸ Ibid.⁶: 59, abridged. Original German: “Der Dichter nennt . . . alle Dinge in dem, was sie sind. Dieses Nennen besteht nicht darin, daß ein vordem schon Bekanntes nur mit einem Namen versehen wird, sondern indem der Dichter das wesentliche Wort spricht, wird durch diese Nennung das Seiende erst zu dem ernannt, was es ist So wird es bekannt als Seiendes.” From: GA 4: 41.

us from our humanity.⁹ *Poiesis* is more than verbal composition, more than a linguistic form of art: it is the point of contact between the earth and the world. It is the lock through which the flow of the Φύσις can reach the world, where the physical is apprehended by the meta-physical and given to man to behold. Reciprocally, it is through the world that man plays a special part in the Φύσις. His meta-physical world is where his will can be expressed, to determine how he will act on the earth, in the physical realm. There cannot be a world without the earth, and the earth would be no “thing,” would be meaningless, without the world. Both are needed in order for the universe to “make sense.”

There is nonetheless always a danger that one of these two poles would take over the other, unbalancing the universe, breaking its equilibrium, which is akin to the harmony between the yin and the yang of Taoist philosophy, or the complementary essence of natural forces of Celtic cosmogony. For Heidegger, such an unbalance occurred in our world with the advent of modern technology, which tends to replace our direct experience of *poiesis* by a set of meta-physical preconceptions that orient our behavior by giving us only a partial vision of nature as Φύσις. This can also be seen in biblical hermeneutics, which from its known origin favored a technical approach to the tradition, forgetting the earthly call of the numinous. The numinous must be brought to the world: this is the essence of most religious traditions, but these traditions become meaningless if they are estranged from the earth, or if the recipients of these traditions fail to experience the earthly dimension of the numinous.

⁹ The origin and meaning of the term is explained further in § 2.2.1.

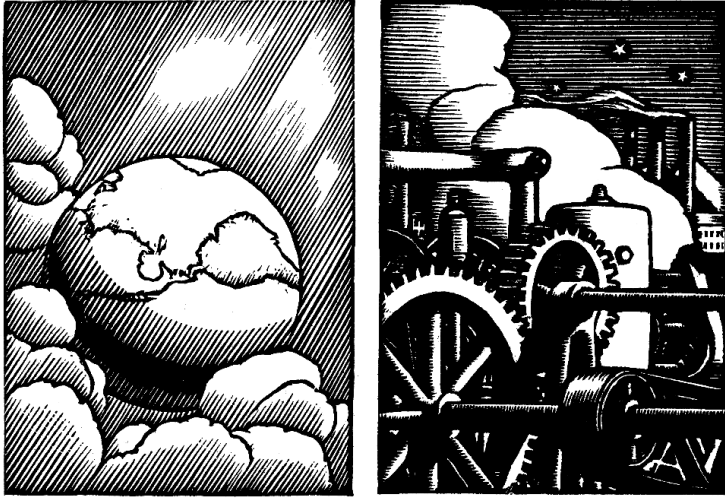


Fig. 1 *Φύσις and Τέχνη*. The organic nature of the divine creation is the source of its beauty. Its oneness is visible to the receptive eye, even when man only sees a blurred image of it through the walls of his house of being. Its splendor pierces stone and bricks, to lodge in his heart, soothing him with the song of the earth. Once man's peace of mind is restored, he is awoken by the call of the *Τέχνη*, which stands in contrast to the *Φύσις*. His technical work is ruled by discontinuity, by willpower, and force.¹⁰

¹⁰ Note concerning the use of artistic illustrations in the present work: The (hi)story of language and being is not meant to be a pure product of the *Tech-nik*. The need for an experience of man's essential being is what it endeavors to reveal, and such an experience requires the appropriation of the strife of *Τέχνη* and *Φύσις*, the strife of world and earth, of the meta-physical and the physical. This (hi)story is a work of the Greek *Τέχνη* rather than of the German *Tech-nik*, in the sense that the Greek word incorporates the meanings of the words "Art," "craft," and "technique." The word remarkably represents the essence of art, which is a union between a sensory experience of the beautiful and a skill that allows this experience to be brought to the world, by a shaping of the earth. The *Τέχνη* is thus far from being antithetical to the poetic. On the contrary, it is an indispensable tool needed for any *poiesis* to occur. Through an artistic representation, fruit of the *Τέχνη*, man's experience of the *Φύσις*, including the experience of the numinous, can be shared with others, helping them to experience themselves what is at the source of the artistic creation. But this demands that one be willing to let himself be transformed by the art

The remedy to these woes is a return to the primal experience of the poetic so that the harmony between Φύσις and Τέχνη can be restored, and so that man can accomplish his destiny as the mediator between earth and world. The German master encouraged such a return, through a rediscovery of the essence of poetry: “Poetry is a founding by the word and in the word. What is established in this way? What remains. But how can what remains be founded? Is it not that which has always already been present? No! Precisely what remains must be secured against being carried away.”¹¹ This remnant is the part of the Φύσις that has been left out by meta-physics, by philosophy, and by other forms of technique. It is what we fail to see because of the disharmony between earth and world, which causes a part of the Φύσις to become eclipsed by meta-physical constructions that lack a link with the earth, with the experience of the phenomenon. This remnant is what poetry means to unveil, to guide us toward a more mature consciousness of the nature of being, which necessitates a harmonious flow between world and earth. This implies a search for a counterweight to the technical tendency that has held sway of Western civilization since the time of Plato and Aristotle. Heidegger saw that some of the Pre-Socratics, among which are Heraclitus and Parmenides, adequately maintained the balance between world and earth. He also recognized that the Oriental tradition also perceived the need for such an equilibrium, even in modern times, to a certain extent, under the influence of Taoist thought and the Zen tradition, in particular. Dürckheim came to a similar conclusion:

The antagonism seems unsurmountable between the “yes” of the West to structures, to the person, to the historicity of our existence and the oriental conception of life, which rejects them more or less completely and seeks the ultimate truth in the One without form,

of others, and be open to receive the experience it can bring. The illustrations contained in this work are meant to facilitate the linking of the following (hi)story to the earth with the senses, so that it will not merely be an abstract and purely worldly discourse on meta-physical “things,” but rather the source of a personal journey toward one’s essential being.

¹¹ Ibid.: 59; Original German: “Dichtung ist Stiftung durch das Wort und im Wort. Was wird so gestiftet? Das Bleibende. Aber kann das Bleibende denn gestiftet werden? Ist es nicht das immer schon Vorhandene? Nein! Gerade das Bleibende muß gegen den Fortriß zum Stehen gebracht werden.” From: GA 4:41.

impersonal, outside of history. There is, however, a higher truth that makes this contradiction between the East and the West a tension within ourselves, a theme of our inner life. Opposites are there thought of as poles, whose dialectical tension diversely moves the whole. The difference between East and West then appears as an intensification of one of these poles.¹²

Dürckheim saw in the Eastern tradition the counterweight needed by the West to bring back the world close to the earth, a counterweight that is deeply linked with the product of the *poiesis*, its outcome, which is *poetry*.

From a very early age, all are familiar with the concept of poetry, but few will in their lifetime truly reflect on its nature and on its essence which is the *poiesis*, the encounter between earth and world, Φύσις and Τέχνη. Poetry is more than what we usually think of it:

Poetry is not merely an ornament accompanying existence, not merely a temporary enthusiasm and certainly not excitement or amusement. Poetry is the sustaining ground of history, and therefore not just an appearance of culture, above all not the mere ‘expression’ of the ‘soul of a culture.’¹³

¹² TBA. Original German: “Unüberbrückbar scheinen zunächst die Gegensätze zwischen dem abendländischen Ja zur Gestalt, zur Person, zur Geschichtlichkeit unseres Daseins, und der östlichen Lebensauffassung, die zu all dem mehr oder weniger Nein sagt und die Wahrheit letztlich im gestaltlosen, unpersönlichen und übergeschichtlichen *All-Einen* sucht. Aber es gibt die höhere Wahrheit, in der die Gegensätzlichkeit von Ost und West als eine Spannung in uns selbst, das heißt als innermenschliches Lebensthema erkannt wird, darin die Gegensätze als Pole begriffen werden, deren dialektische Spannung das lebendige Ganze, je nach der Betonung des einen oder des anderen, in verschiedener Weise bewegt. Eine solche Betrachtung kann die unterschiedliche Eigenart als andere Akzentuierung der Pole verstehen.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried. *Der Ruf nach dem Meister: Die Bedeutung geistiger Führung auf dem Weg zum Selbst*. Weilheim: O.W. Barth, 1972: 16. Print.

¹³ Heidegger, Martin. *Elucidations of Hölderlin’s Poetry*. Amherst, N.Y: Humanity Books, 2000: 60. Print; Original German: “Dichtung ist nicht nur ein begleitender Schmuck des Daseins, nicht nur eine zeitweilige Begeisterung oder gar nur eine Erhitzung und Unterhaltung. Dichtung ist der tragende Grund der Geschichte und deshalb auch nicht nur eine Erscheinung der Kultur und erst recht nicht der bloße »Ausdruck« einer »Kulturseele«.” From: GA 4: 42.

Poetry is both the ground of being and the ground of language, an inceptual experience through which man “creates” (ποιέω [poiéō]) by bringing nature to language, by re-presenting it with words. What Heidegger seeks to reveal through poetry is the “truth of being,” what being is in itself. His later works, like the *Contributions to philosophy*,¹⁴ show a great interest in the figure of the *poet* himself, the man who announces and seeks the truth of being, seen as a prophet whose mission is to proclaim a new age founded on poetry and to pave the way for the arrival of “the last god.” The poet’s role is to throw away the language that is without roots in experience and to cultivate new words, freshly planted ones that provide a strong anchorage of man’s world in the earth. As Dürckheim said: “the higher Life, hidden by what has come to pass and objective concepts, can only spring out from a creative and liberating renewal.”¹⁵ The poet can apply his creative skills to anything that is worldly, such as philosophy, the sciences, or religious traditions. Concerning the biblical tradition, the poet will not replace the hermeneuts but he may balance their work to restore the lost equilibrium between world and earth. This balancing can only come with a change of language, by the rejection of any overly abstract terminology and a favoring of pre-existing terms, especially the simplest ones, those which are known to all, instinctively, as they are the ones that have the deepest roots in man’s experience of the earth and the skies. Poetry “never takes language as a material at its disposal; rather, poetry itself first makes language possible,”¹⁶ says Heidegger. There is therefore no need for us to create a new language: we must rather only re-dis-cover the origin of our own language.

Poetry is nonetheless only a means, which can be used toward different ends. For the German philosopher, this end was what he called “the truth of being,” “the essence of being,” or

¹⁴ Heidegger, Martin, Richard Rojcewicz, and Daniela Vallega-Neu. *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*. Indiana University Press, 2012. Print; Original German: GA 65.

¹⁵ TBA. Original German: “das Große Leben, das sich in allem Gewordenen und gegenständlich Begriffenen verhüllt, blüht nur im schöpferischerlösenden Neuwerden auf.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Vom doppelten Ursprung des Menschen*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag, 2009: 74. Print.

¹⁶ Heidegger, Martin. *Elucidations of Hölderlin’s Poetry*. Amherst, N.Y: Humanity Books, 2000: 60. Print; Original German: “Daher nimmt die Dichtung niemals die Sprache als einen vorhandenen Werkstoff auf, sondern die Dichtung selbst ermöglicht erst die Sprache.” From: GA 4: 43.

“beyng.” Probably because of the fact that language is always “meta-physical,” seen by him as a simplification or a caricature of the Φύσις, or perhaps because it is something that must be experienced rather than merely talked about, this “truth of being” is rarely clearly presented by Heidegger. His goal, it would seem, is the unconcealment and the experience of the truth of being, outside of the atheist/theist dichotomy, by rejecting “religion” but nonetheless also waiting for the “last god” and seeking “the holy.” Refusing to be the prisoner of categories, he is both the disciple of Nietzsche and someone who asked for a catholic burial before his death, meticulously blurring the lines, breaking the “metaphysics” that rigidifies our thought. His later works show a deep preoccupation for man’s destiny, as *Schick-sal* or *Ge-schik*, “the state of being sent.”¹⁷ Sent by whom, and for what? Exclusively focused on the nature of being, the philosopher does not seem to have looked for a direct answer to this question. Perhaps because by seeking to know the “who,” man would already anthropomorphize the source of being and head back toward an onto-theology. The path of the return to poetry is a great contribution to modern thought. But it is only a starting point. The richness of the gift of poetry only shines when it paves the way for an experience, that is, when the product of the *poiesis* can be brought back to the earth, once it has been shared and has been skillfully developed, in the world. For this segment of the path, Dürckheim will be our guide.

¹⁷ Sembera, Richard. *Rephrasing Heidegger: A Companion to Being and Time*. University of Ottawa Press, 2008: 238. Print.

1.2 The need for a world close to earth and the experience of man's essential being

*Margt hef ég lært af
fornkvæðum vorum, og af
hinum heilögu formálum í
hofi og á þingi; og margt
hefur þú sagt mér. En eitt
hefur enginn sagt mér ennþá:
Til hvers lifum vér?*

Much have I learned from
our ancient poetry, and from
the holy words in the temple
and the assembly; and much
have you told me. One thing,
however, has someone yet to
tell me: for what purpose do
we live?

— Gunnar Gunnarsson, *Earth*¹⁸

Martin Heidegger's thought is a real “work of art,” with “art” understood in the sense of the Greek Τέχνη. He strove to bring the world back to the earth so that man would perceive the “truth of being.” He spent his life teaching and writing about this question, and, borrowing a metaphor from Wittgenstein, relentlessly banged his head against the limits of language.¹⁹ His search would end in a retreat from language, inspired by Eckhart's *Gelassenheit*,²⁰ realizing that what he would like to say would not fit inside the meager house of being that he inhabited. The “truth of being” cannot be heard within the walls of this house, so the poet should ultimately be silent, it would seem.

The German master, perhaps so concerned with language itself and the worldly vision of the truth of being, may nonetheless have forgotten that the earth is more than an anchorage point for the world, and that the truth of being is not simply meant to be contemplated in a world grounded in the earth but is rather meant

¹⁸ TBA. Icelandic version from: Gunnar Gunnarsson. *Jörð: Íslenskað hefur Sigurður Einarsson*. Reykjavík: Útgáfufélagið Landnáma, 1950: 30–31. Print.

¹⁹ Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2010. N. Pag. Print. (§ 119)

²⁰ The German term *Gelassenheit*, used by Meister Eckhart and Heidegger, designates a *release* of the mind's grip on spiritual matters, the divine in particular. Abandoning representations and concepts, man can then experience the divine more closely.

to be experienced directly, as an earthly phenomenon. The earth is not only a ground for the meta-physical: it is the source of all our experiences. As Dürckheim reminds us:

To any experience, and even to any contact with being, belongs the specific quality of the *numinous*; the numinous make us feel — no matter how subtly —, in what is felt through the veil of the immediately given which dominates the foreground of our consciousness, the presence of Life which holds sway upon every thing.²¹

This earthly dimension of being is one that should be at the center of any search for the truth of being. The truth of being is not meant to simply be a part of the world, not meant to be simply “ex-pressed” in language. Even a retreat in silence is futile if it does not give place to a conscious **experience** of being. The word “experience” nonetheless demands clarifications.

Man’s life is replete with experiences and this word is often used to describe almost anything that is part of it. What Dürckheim means by an “experience of being” is nonetheless very different than the everyday experience of the earth on which man is thrown. This word is also easily confused with another: knowledge, but the distinction between the two is necessary if one is to clearly see what the experience of man’s essential being entails. Dürckheim’s call is indeed not meant to invite men to develop an epistemology but is rather meant to be a call to a direct experience of their essential being, and to its appropriation.

Fortunately, many pathfinders have preceded us and have left us the fruit of their work devoted to the pondering of the question of the distinction between knowledge and experience. The thought-experiment called “Mary’s room,” now famous in the field of the philosophy of mind, can help us discern the difference between the knowledge of the truth of being and its experience. The

²¹ TBA. Original German: “Zu jeder Seinserfahrung, aber auch schon zu jeder Seinsföhlung gehört die spezifische Erlebnisqualität des *Numinosen*. Das Numinose ist die Qualität des Erlebens, die immer, und wenn auch noch so zart, die Präsenz des alldurchwaltenden Lebens durch den Schleier des unmittelbar Gegebenen und das Bewußtsein vordergründig Beherrschenden hindurch spüren läßt.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Vom doppelten Ursprung des Menschen*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag, 2009: 99–100. Print.

experiment is described as follows:

Mary is a brilliant scientist who is, for whatever reason, forced to investigate the world from a black and white room via a black and white television monitor. She specialises in the neurophysiology of vision and acquires, let us suppose, all the physical information there is to obtain about what goes on when we see ripe tomatoes, or the sky, and use terms like 'red', 'blue', and so on. She discovers, for example, just which wavelength combinations from the sky stimulate the retina, and exactly how this produces via the central nervous system the contraction of the vocal cords and expulsion of air from the lungs that results in the uttering of the sentence 'The sky is blue'. ... What will happen when Mary is released from her black and white room or is given a colour television monitor? Will she learn anything or not?²²

To argue that Mary understood what the color blue is because she knew all the physical properties of this color and knew how it is perceived by man's body, as modeled by physics, physiology, and other sciences, is hardly tenable. This example can also be pushed to the extreme, to make the dilemma that it points out even more apparent: would a blind man who *knows* all the human knowledge concerning colors and vision really *know* what it is to see? A positive answer would be akin to the view arguing that objective, shared knowledge is all that counts as knowledge, an opinion which, in the light of this thought-experiment, would seem preposterous. A negative answer, on the other hand, would seem to put into question the very purpose of the search for knowledge. Mary's situation can nonetheless be clarified if it is seen from outside the technical framework of the philosophy of mind.

While in the room, what Mary is given is a worldly knowledge that truthfully represents the reality of colors and of their perception. She can contemplate and learn all the works, carved in language, concerning these colors. The world into which she is thrown is surely grounded in the earth, and everything that she learns is indeed "true." Mary, however, is not only thrown

²² Jackson, Frank. "Epiphenomenal Qualia." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 32.127 (1982): 130. Print.

into a world: she is also thrown on the earth, but this earthly environment is not the free expanse in which the rest of mankind lives. She is in an earthly prison, a place where her experience of the phenomenon is severely limited, and one from which colors have been banished. Her knowledge of colors is grounded in the earth, but the part of the earth that provides the foundation of this knowledge is kept hidden, inaccessible to her. She therefore cannot relate her worldly knowledge to an earthly experience, to something she can feel independently of the peculiarities of her world or independently of the extent of her knowledge.

The earth is the ground upon which the world is built. The world can rise from the earth, but it itself cannot form a basis for the creation of the earth. It can only assist man while he shapes what has already been created. No matter the amount and precision of Mary's worldly knowledge of colors, their essence would still escape her until she sees them with her own eyes. Any little child, who does not possess any worldly knowledge of them, would be closer to knowing the essence of colors because, contrary to her, the child **experienced** them.

The link between the Mary's room experiment and the (hi)story of language and being is that the telling of man's journey toward his essential being, through language, is equivalent to the worldly knowledge learned in the room. Dürckheim's call to an experience of man's essential being is a call to something that cannot be told in language and cannot be given by someone else. Man's essential being is something fundamentally personal and intimate, something more precious than any philosophical discourse concerning the truth of being. Man must experience it together with the earth and not only as the representation of someone else's experience. Worldly knowledge, however, nonetheless has its place in man's journey of appropriation. The world can point out the earth and lead man to it. This is why Dürckheim put the fruit of his experiences into writing so that others might find the path he trod. The present (hi)story also intends to provide such a guidance toward an experience of the truth of being, showing that the (hi)story of language is interwoven with the (hi)story of man's being and that both form a roadmap for the experience of man's essential being.

The path toward man's appropriation and experience of his essential being is thus to be found in what distinguishes him from the

other earthly creatures: language. Language is inherently worldly but it is also rooted in the earth, and it is through the balancing between world and earth, Φύσις and Τέχνη, which can occur *in* language that man can not only find a way to see the nature of his essential being but also a way to experience it. Philosophy is a worldly, technical discipline, and thus even when brought closer to the earth, it must be completed by another, one more independent from the world, one going deeper into the earth. This is where the work of Dürckheim can play an important part, as an earthly counterweight to Heidegger's world and the philosophical tradition it follows. Dürckheim's acquaintance with man's essential being will be another key unlocking the door toward the (hi)story of language and being in the narrative.

The German philosopher, who met Dürckheim several times in their native Bavaria, told him that "to speak of a philosophy, one had to speak the language of the philosophers."²³ What sounds like a reproach or mere condescension in this statement may be explained by the fundamentally different nature of the work of the two men, which are nonetheless complementary: Dürckheim is not someone of the world. He is someone whose life was spent seeking a practical experience of his essential being and of its source. He wrote books, which are also worldly works, but his writings are devoid of metaphysical musings and are exclusively concerned with the nurturing and exploration of the experience of the numinous. The apparent naïveté of Dürckheim's thought, which may have been what was pointed out by Heidegger, is not a weakness, but rather part of its strength, and a demonstration of Dürckheim's disinterest for the valorization of his own *ego*. He wrote only short books, in everyday language, but nonetheless showed a consciousness of the limits and dangers of the house of being. As an example of such a consciousness, it can be noted that he refrained from determining a precise and unique name for the source and nature of the numinous, calling it Life, Essential Being, Divine Being, BEING, and even God or Christ.

Contrary to Heidegger, who always kept away all religious traditions from explicitly appearing in his writings and lectures, Dürckheim saw that "the experience of being is the star around which

²³ Goettmann, Alphonse. *Dialogue on the Path of Initiation: An Introduction to the Life and Thought of Karlfried Graf Dürckheim*. New York: Globe Pr Books, 1991: 11. Print.

the religious life of all religions gravitates,”²⁴ and thus that the religious traditions have something to teach us. They do not simply contain bits of truth among a larger *mythos*: they as a whole represent different paths uncovering different aspects of man’s being, and they thus must be approached with trust and benevolence in order for their truth to shine and be seen. Dürckheim nonetheless also considered that the modern man is in dire need of a new anthropology, one that would break the illusory wall between the transcendent, what is beyond the heavens, and the earthly experiences of the phenomenon:

The anthropology that has dominated us for centuries reveals itself too narrow. It reduces man’s totality to his five senses, his reason, his belonging to a community and his fidelity to some worldly values and an existential order. Beyond this begins the “transcendent,” which belongs to the domain of faith. Transcendent, certainly, since this “beyond” goes farther than the horizon of the natural world-ego. One should, however, precisely learn to admit that man’s very essence goes beyond this horizon and that the transcendence, immanent in himself, constitutes his essential being. There is one more thing: this essential being, this transcendence that dwells within us, is not located in the domain of faith or beliefs anymore. It *enters the domain of our experience* and becomes knowledge. When this occurs, minds are divided. And thus begins a new era²⁵ (Emphasis added).

²⁴ TBA. Original German: “Die Seinserfahrung ist der Stern, um den das religiöse Leben aller Religionen kreist.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Vom doppelten Ursprung des Menschen*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag, 2009: 114. Print.

²⁵ TBA. Original German: “Eine uns jahrhundertlang beherrschende Anthropologie erweist sich als zu eng. Sie reduziert die Ganzheit des Menschen auf das, was er kraft seiner fünf Sinne, seiner Ratio, seiner Zugehörigkeit zu einer Gemeinschaft und in seiner Bindung an weltliche Werte und Ordnungen ist. Was darüber hinausgeht, ist „transzendent“ und Sache des Glaubens. Gewiß, es ist transzendent, insofern es den Horizont des natürlichen Welt-Ich überschreitet. Aber das eben müssen wir lernen, uns zuzugestehen, daß der Kern des Menschen selbst den Ich-Horizont überschreitet, ja daß die ihm immanente Transzendenz sein *Wesen* ausmacht. Und noch eins kommt heute hinzu: dies Wesen, die uns einwohnende Transzendenz, hört auf, eine Sache nur des Glaubens zu sein. Sie tritt in den Kreis der Erfahrung und wird zum

Breaking the artificial separation between the experience of the numinous and the world of anthropological and philosophical thought is one of the great contributions brought by the count. This new anthropology's uniqueness is to unite sciences like philosophy, anthropology, and psychology, with the religious traditions, as it sees them all as different paths originating from a dual need: the need to bring the experience of the numinous to the world, so as to rationalize or explain it, and the need to bring back the fruit of this rationalization back to an earthly experience. This new anthropology nonetheless does not require the acceptance of any dogmas or preconceptions from either side: traditions are considered beneficial but they must remain subjugated to man's experience, grounded in the earth, otherwise they lose their purpose and become a hindrance on the path.

The path cleared by Dürckheim encourages those who venture upon it to search for their essential being in everything: the earthly that surrounds them, and the worldly traditions that guide their lives. Heidegger and Dürckheim were both influenced by Chinese Taoist thought and Sino-Japanese Zen, and both had exchanges with the most influential figure in modern Zen: D. T. Suzuki (鈴木大拙). The former would even have declared: "If I understand this man [Suzuki] correctly, this is what I have been trying to say in all my writings,"²⁶ but only the latter would dedicate his life to an exploration of this tradition, whose heart is not to be found in concepts and books but rather in an experience and a continuous personal transformation. Dürckheim nonetheless never became a Buddhist, and he even declared: "I seek to place myself in the wake of Christ and not in that of the Buddha."²⁷ He nonetheless was not a "Christian" in the common sense of the term. He was neither believer nor unbeliever, neither orthodox nor liberal. He was a seeker, perhaps one of the prophet-like poets described in Heidegger's *Contributions to philosophy*, someone who was in dia-

Wissen. Wo das geschieht, da scheiden sich die Geister. Und damit ist ein neues Zeitalter angebrochen!" From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Vom doppelten Ursprung des Menschen*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag, 2009: 15. Print.

²⁶ Suzuki, Daisetz T. *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D. T. Suzuki*. Ed. William Barrett. Reissue edition. New York: Doubleday, 1996: 11. Print.

²⁷ Goettmann, Alphonse. *Dialogue on the Path of Initiation: An Introduction to the Life and Thought of Karlfried Graf Dürckheim*. New York: Globe Pr Books, 1991: 50. Print.

logue with the traditions of the West and the East rather than their servant; a mediator and beacon guiding men toward the revelation of their essential being. He saw that both Christian and Buddhist traditions could help him and others on this path. He recognized that “zen is the doctrine of Being, of the experience of Being and of life rooted in Being,” and that “this doctrine is not a philosophical theory of being, and has nothing do with meta-physical inquiry, but expresses an inner *experience*—the experience of Being, which we ourselves *are* in our true nature.”²⁸ In this tradition, he found the key to what was hinted at by the discourses on being of Western thinkers, a practical nurturing of the experience of the numinous, an experience of “divine being.” Dürckheim calls us to “the *awakening* that is central to Zen. In Zen, it is less a matter of the old eye’s showing us a new world than of a new eye’s remaking the old world for us.”²⁹ Dürckheim’s vision nevertheless also differs from the one offered by traditional Buddhism. His goal is not the dissolution of the *ego*, not to become an *awakened* in order to be released from a cycle of reincarnation, but rather the accomplishment of a destiny, in relation to the divine:

The purpose of all living things, man among them, is to manifest the divine in the world. Man’s distinctive virtue lies in the fact that the great, the Divine Life becomes in him, ‘conscious of itself’. In the freedom of conscious life—as opposed to mechanical life—the divine can shine forth and take form. Therefore the true man is he who, in freedom and with clear awareness, embodies and reveals the Divine Being within himself.³⁰

²⁸ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen and Us*. Boston: Dutton, 1987: 49. Print; Original German: “Zen ist die Lehre vom Sein, von der Erfahrung des Seins und vom Leben aus dem Sein. Diese Lehre ist keine Ontologie, ist nicht das Ergebnis philosophischen Denkens oder einer metaphysischen Spekulation. Die Lehre des Zen ist Ausdruck einer inneren Erfahrung. Es meint die Erfahrung vom Sein, das wir im Wesen selbst sind.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen und wir*. Frankfurt: FISCHER Digital, 2016: 51–52. Print.

²⁹ Ibid.^t: 66; Original German: “Aber gerade das hat mit der Erleuchtung, mit dem Erwachen, das Zen meint, nichts zu tun. Hier handelt es sich vielmehr darum, daß der Mensch nicht mit dem alten Auge etwas Neues sieht, sondern daß ein neues Auge ihm auch das Alte verwandelt,” from Ibid.^o: 69.

³⁰ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971: 16. Print; Original German: “Der Sinn des Mensch-Seins ist wie der aller anderen Wesen das

In this declaration, Dürckheim is closer to Heidegger's vision than to orthodox Buddhism. It also shows a common root of the two men's thought, which is the Germanic tradition, that of the Ragnarök and the Nibelungen, of the Edda where fate is the supreme ruler of mankind and man's goal is to accomplish himself. Dürckheim is a child of the Buddha, Christ, and Wotan, but one who has left his parents' home in order to seek his own destiny. But this should not give the impression that it represents a form of religious syncretism. The different traditions are not revered as truth because they are holy, revealed knowledge. They are instead all three honored because they embody a part of the path toward the truth of being. They are a means to a single end, which is the truth, rooted in experience, in the earth and beneath the skies.

The different traditions may nonetheless have more in common than it would seem at first glance. When the count explains the nature of the Zen tradition, one may find that the river flowing in the East may come from the same source as the one in the West:

Zen is essentially about *rebirth* from the experience of Being. Zen teaches us to discover the transcendental core of our own selves in an immediate and practical sense, to "taste" divine Being in the here-and-now. It has nothing to do with analytical logic, dogmatic belief, or even speculative metaphysics, but points the way to an experience we can have and, indeed, are meant to have. Once we have had It, we come to see that our earthly existence, between the twin poles of life and death, is rooted in a transcendental state of Being, which forms the hidden ground of our own nature and which we, as human beings, can and must bring to consciousness³¹ (Emphasis added).

Sichtbarwerden des Göttlichen in der Welt. Das Besondere des Menschen liegt darin, daß das große, das göttliche LEBEN sich im Menschen seiner selbst *bewußt* werden und in der Freiheit des Menschen in einem bewußten Leben aufleuchten und Gestalt werden will. So ist der rechte Mensch also der, der das in seinem Wesen verkörperte divine Sein im *Glanz* seines Erlebens, in der *Strahlung* seiner Gestalt und im *Segen* seines Wirkens in Freiheit und lichter Bewußtheit offenbar macht im weltlichen Dasein." From Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Der Alltag als Übung: vom Weg zur Verwandlung*. Bern: Hans Huber, 1962: 13. Print.

³¹ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen and Us*. Boston: Dutton, 1987: 6. Print; Original German: "Was ist das zentrale Anliegen des Zen? Die Neugeburt des

This “rebirth from the experience of Being” can also be seen outside of the Zen tradition. The biblical narrative itself may as a whole be seen as the (hi)story of such a rebirth of man following his fall from Eden and his walk toward his redemption, as *metanoia* (μετάνοια). To see this nonetheless demands that we step out of traditional hermeneutics, and even from the surface of the narrative itself. As Dürckheim exhorted us, the Bible must be experienced rather than read. We must regain a child’s view of this tradition, as “the adult, lost in a world that he objectively apprehends, most of the time lives outside of the light of Being. The brightness of the day of his profane conscience conceals the starry glow of Being.”³² The weight of the hermeneutical tradition cements our mind and dulls our senses to the intricate relation between the narrative and the question of being. What is in the foreground in Zen is concealed in the Bible, but it nonetheless pervades its narrative. It waits to be unconcealed, and the insights of Heidegger and Dürckheim may be what is needed to clear the way toward this dimension of the biblical tradition. Before being able to unlock the door of this experience, however, one must first learn how to bring the world to the earth; learn how a work of language can be experienced with the senses rather than as an ideation.

Menschen aus der Erfahrung des Seins! Zen lehrt die empirische Entdeckung des transzendenten Kernes unseres Selbstes, lehrt das »Schmecken« des divinen Seins in diesem weltlichen Dasein. Zen lehrt es nicht in der Weise eines analytischen, schlußfolgernden Denkens, nicht in der Form eines dogmatischen Glaubens und auch nicht als System einer spekulativen Metaphysik, sondern als Weg zu „einer dem Menschen möglichen und im Grund zugeordneten Erfahrung.“ In ihr geht uns auf, daß unser zwischen Leben und Tod gespanntes weltliches Dasein in einem überweltlichen Sein wurzelt, das wir alle im verborgenen Grunde unseres Wesens sind und dessen bewußt zu werden unsere menschliche Chance und Aufgabe ist.“ From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen und wir*. Frankfurt: FISCHER Digital, 2016: 11–12. Print.

³² TBA. Original German: “. . . verloren an die gegenständlich begriffene Welt, lebt der Erwachsene meist als der dem Seins-Licht Entwachsene dahin. Im Tageslicht seines Weltbewußtseins ist das Licht seines Wesens-Sternes verblaßt.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Vom doppelten Ursprung des Menschen*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag, 2009: 104. Print.

1.3 Bringing back the world to the earth: from *meta-phor* to meta-narrative

As said by Gadamer, language is what gives us a world.³³ *Poiesis*, on the other hand, is an action through which the earth is brought to the world; how man breaks down the unity and continuity of the Φύσις and trans-forms it into an intelligible structure. Dürckheim reminds us that the true aim of the preservation of the world's link to the earth is to “enable an upward growth in accordance with the roots.”³⁴ But man always tends to favor growth over safety, and thus his world sooner or later naturally loses its earthly anchorage.

As the world becomes more abstract and more complex following the relentless development of the Τέχνη, man loses the possibility of relating it to his experience. Engulfed in the higher levels of the world, he strives to create structures and systems but has no means to ascertain their truth, as they would need to be rooted in the earth and to be directly experienced in order for him to do so. As a counterweight to *poiesis*, however, comes *meta-phor*. Under the name of this widely known “literary trope” is hidden one of the most fundamental forces moving language.

A *meta-phor* literally designates the carrying of something beyond its original location. The word itself is a metaphor, first defined in Aristotle's *Poetics*, in a technical way, as: “giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy.”³⁵ Such a carrying can be performed on any element of the world, with more or less pertinence. A large part of the lexicon of our languages is the direct product of such a carrying over rather than the result of a *poiesis* bringing the earth to the world. These metaphors are nonetheless for the most part now lexicalized, or “worn out,” to

³³ See the Introduction.

³⁴ TBA. Original German: “Und alsbald wird der Sinn der rechten Erdung deutlich: das wurzelgerechte Wachstum nach oben.” From: Ibid: 194.

³⁵ Barnes, Jonathan. *The Complete Works of Aristotle Volume 2*. Princeton University Press, 1991: 1472. Print; Original Greek: “μεταφορά δέ ἐστὶν ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορά ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους ἐπὶ εἶδος ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶδους ἐπὶ τὸ γένος ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶδους ἐπὶ εἶδος ἢ κατὰ τὸ ἀνάλογον,” from: Aristotle. “Poetics 1457b.” *Perseus*, 23 Sept. 2015.

borrow a metaphor from Ricoeur,³⁶ and have lost the link with their source. Despite its precision, the Greek philosopher's definition still overlooks the fact that the carrying is not usually done in an arbitrary direction, even though it could be so. A more insightful definition is the one of Fontanier: "to present an idea as [*sous le signe de*] another, more striking or more familiar."³⁷ It shows that the metaphorical force pulls toward the familiar, what is personally experienced, that is, the earthly. The heart of the "live metaphor," (*la métaphore vive*) that is, one that embodies the link between its source and its destination, is to bring back the abstract world closer to the earth. One seldom creates an abstract, complex *meta-phor* to express something that man can experience directly with his senses. The opposite is far more common: it is used to express something complex and abstract, an idea from the higher spheres of the world, in a simpler and more intelligible manner, by relating it to man's daily experience of the earth. In English, the difficult concept of "understanding" is designated by a metaphor: a man "under-stands." In Icelandic or Japanese, on the other hand, to "understand" is to cut or separate (*skilja* in Icelandic, 分かる [*wakaru*] in Japanese). Other languages similarly carry over the abstract concept of "understanding" and relate it to an earthly action, such as the act of standing over something or cutting it with a knife.

Meta-phor must nonetheless be distinguished from *poiesis*. Ricoeur asked: "What then is true poetry? It is, Heidegger says, that which awakens 'the largest view'; here 'the word is brought forth from its inception,' and it 'makes World appear in all things'. Now, is this not what living metaphor does?"³⁸ A clear no must be answered to this last question, as *meta-phor* is a process that is opposite and yet complementary to the *poiesis*. Whereas the *poiesis* transforms what is experienced by the senses into "things"

³⁶ Ricoeur, Paul. *Métaphore vive (La)*. Le Seuil, 2013: 141. Print.

³⁷ TBA. Original French: "à présenter une idée sous le signe d'une autre idée plus frappante ou plus connue." Quoted from: Ibid.:79, originally from: Fontanier, Pierre. *Les Figures du discours*. Paris: Flammarion, 1977: 95. Print.

³⁸ Ricoeur, Paul. *The Rule of Metaphor: The creation of Meaning in Language*. London: Routledge, 2004: 335-336. Print; Original French: "Qu'est-ce alors que la poésie véritable? C'est celle, dit Heidegger (207), «qui éveille la vision la plus vaste», qui «fait remonter la parole à partir de son origine», qui «fait apparaître le monde». Or n'est-ce pas là ce que fait la métaphore vive?" From: Ricoeur, Paul. *Métaphore vive (La)*. Le Seuil, 2013: 361. Print.

that can then become part of the world, the main role of the *meta-phor* is to anchor the higher, more abstract parts of the world into the earth so that they may be more easily intelligible. Ricoeur, following Derrida, is nonetheless correct concerning the effect of the metaphor's death, its wearing out, which renders its metaphorical nature invisible: "where the metaphor fades away, the meta-physical concept arises."³⁹ The natural death of metaphors explains how the world can lose its link with earth, or, in Derrida's own metaphorical language, how it becomes a "white mythology": "Metaphysics erased within itself the wonderful scene from which it came, and which nonetheless remains active, moving, inscribed in white ink, an invisible drawing, covered in the palimpsest."⁴⁰ These dead metaphors, which slowly become alienated from the earth as they become purely technical, meta-physical signs, can nevertheless themselves be carried back to the ground by a new, "living" metaphor, thereby reincarnating them into new signs and counterbalancing the inevitable death of the old.

The carrying away of the *meta-phor* thus ensures that the upward growth of the world is done "in accordance with the roots,"⁴¹ that is, not betraying the reality of the Φύσις and not leading men away from the path toward their destiny. The two processes, *poiesis* and *meta-phor*, form complementary forces aimed at maintaining the balance between world and earth, with man acting as the mediator between the two. It is only when this equilibrium is preserved that the destiny of man may be unfolded: to build the world toward the heavens, without losing ground, so that he may become a conscious instrument of divine being.

The carrying over of a sign is nonetheless bound by the limits of the world: "the metaphorical only exists within metaphysics,"⁴² says Heidegger. A metaphor remains a linguistic sign, and as such, it remains a "thing" of the world rather than one of the earth. The metaphor nonetheless shortens the distance between the sign

³⁹ TBA. Original French: "là où la métaphore s'efface, le concept métaphysique se lève." From: Ibid.: 364.

⁴⁰ TBA. Original French: "La métaphysique a effacé en elle-même la scène fabuleuse qui l'a produite et qui reste néanmoins active, remuante, inscrite à l'encre blanche, dessin invisible et recouvert dans le palimpseste." From: Ibid.: 364.

⁴¹ See § 1.3.

⁴² TBA. Original German: "Das Metaphorische gibt es nur innerhalb der Metaphysik." From: GA 10: 72.

and the earth by inserting the sign in the very foundation of language: it is now intertwined with the parts of the world that are the most deeply rooted in the earth, that is, the core lexicon related to man's basic sensory experiences, which are shared by all men. Does it mean that man can have a direct experience of what is purely worldly? No, but the carrying over toward the ground of the higher meta-physical constructions brings them as close as possible to the realm of experience, and it thus considerably facilitates the creation of a bond between the worldly and the earthly. Metaphors can bring the worldly to the **twilight**, where the earth meets the world, and where the two may become almost indistinguishable from each other. This is the realm of imagination, of the projection, the lucid dream, where our earthly bodies forget themselves and are led to feel and experience the most grounded parts of the world as if these parts were earthly, by weaving the memories of past earthly experiences with the fantasies of the world. This twilight is the dwelling of the mystic, of the poet. It may even be visited by those inclined to use certain plants or chemicals, even though this would not be of great use without a poetic practice. It is the place where earth and world enter into contact, and where the significance of both can finally be revealed. The earth is meaningless without the world to render it intelligible, and the world is equally meaningless if it is not experienced by flowing back on the surface of the earth. The twilight of world and earth is the ideal *locus* where man can bring portions of his world to the realm of his experiences. It represents the contact surface between world and earth, where the *poiesis* meets the *meta-phor*; where what comes from the earth toward the world meets what comes from the world and is brought back to the earth.

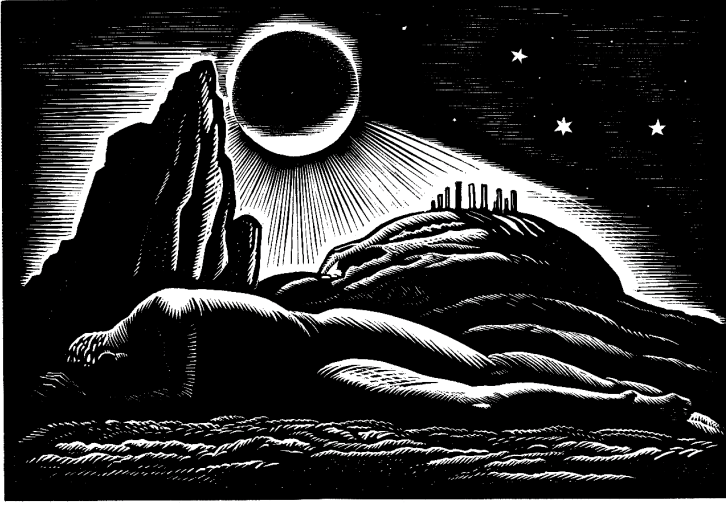


Fig. 2 *Twilight*. His naked body laid upon the bare earth, his eyes closed but still awake, when the sun's brilliance is veiled and the stars timidly begin to shine, man becomes the surface of contact between the soil and the skies, the earth and the world. When things can hardly be distinguished, this is the privileged moment to clearly see the nature of the Φύσις.

The carrying operated by the *meta-phor* is not confined to individual words or sentences. The length of a sign indeed does not fundamentally change its nature, and just as a concept designated by a single word may need to be and can be carried back to the earth, so do larger signs and even narratives as a whole. Through a tension between *poiesis* and *meta-phor*; a tension between Φύσις and Τέχνη, earth and world, man may first come to perceive the nature of his essential being, and then, once the path to follow has been lit by his *logos*, he may bring back this worldly vision to the twilight, where it can become the source of an experience of his essential being.

A simple *meta-phor*, one that will also carry with it a large part of the tradition of the technical study of language, will be the key allowing the opening of the door toward the (hi)story of language and being. The emergence of this *meta-phor* will mark the beginning of the possibility for man to bring language itself to

the twilight so that it can become the source of an experience of the truth of being. This *meta-phor* is very simple: language is the “house of being.” More than a mere poetic image, this *meta-phor* will offer man a chance to “step-out” of his facticity and stand in another. It will open up a possibility for him to experience a first *ek-stasis*, one that will allow him to unveil the meta-narrative of language and being.

1.4 The first *ek-stasis*: bringing the world to the world

The previous pages have shown the power of the *poiesis*. They also showed that once the product of the *poiesis* has been shared with other men, been extended and refined, it must then be brought back to the earth so that it can broaden the horizon of man’s experience and ultimately lead him to his essential being. *Poiesis* and *meta-phor* are tools, given to man to use as he sees fit, but man needs to discover how he is meant to use them. Fortunately, we are not the first men to ponder this question, and generations of pathfinders have left us the fruits of their investigations. The long tradition of human thought already preserves their discoveries: both the poetic works that they created and that shaped our world, and the metaphors that they found to help us link their work with our personal experiences. One of these pathfinders is Martin Heidegger, who opened the way that will here be trodden for the unveiling of the (hi)story of language and being.

The German philosopher can be seen as a guide, the last link of a long lineage of pathfinders who give us a way to not only perceive worldly “things,” that is, works of language, but also to bring us to experience the world itself, as world and not only as a stockpile of metaphysical knowledge. He will also show us that the horizon of our world is limited by our blindness to its very nature. Being thrown and permanently living in a world, it indeed becomes too familiar to be perceived, and thus the essence of language and of this world remains not only unseen but also out of the reach of our senses. The works of the German master, as they will be interpreted here, will thus give us a way to unveil the nature of the different blindnesses that affect the dwellers of the house of being.

Through this unveiling, a way to break the spell of one of them will be discovered, allowing us to bring the world back to the earth through a *meta-phor*: the world is what language opens up, and language is the house of man's being. This *meta-phor* will become the starting point of the unveiling of the meta-narrative of language and being. It will be associated with the metaphysical scholarly tradition concerning language and be completed with other *meta-phors* so as to form a vision of the (hi)story of language and being from the point of view of the biblical tradition, a vision that will itself be a means for the transformation of our own relationship with our essential being.

The breaking of the obliviousness (*lethe*) to what is too familiar to be seen will come through an *ek-stasis*, that is, a stepping out from the familiar, making one stand outside of his previous facticity, something that allows its unconcealment. This process will nonetheless not be limited to the unconcealment of the world to man, as the house of being. It will also become the backbone of the whole (hi)story of language and being that it opens, which will contain six *ek-stases* representing different stations of the vehicle that is language. The nature of the *ek-stasis* will now be examined in its general dimension so that the multiple *ekstases* of the (hi)story of language and being in the biblical narrative can be clearly perceived. Its first occurrence, the one that unconceals the world within the world itself and allows man to begin to unveil the (hi)story of language and being, will also be presented in the following pages, offering the reader an opportunity to open himself up to the experience it offers, as a doorway to man's (hi)story.

1.4.1 *Lethe*

衆生近きを知らずして
 遠く求むるはかなさよ
 譬えば水の中に居て
 渴を叫ぶが如くなり
 長者の家の子となりて
 貧里に迷うに異ならず

Woe to those who seek afar off
 and know not what is close at
 hand! They are like people
 standing in water and shouting
 for water nonetheless. Born
 noble and rich beyond taunting,
 they wander their way as if
 poor, wretched and unsolaced.

— Hakuin, *Song of the Zen*⁴³

The word λήθη (*lethe*) is an Ancient Greek term, resurrected by Heidegger, designating “a fateful occurrence that overtakes human beings, an occurrence, however, that pertains to all beings: they fall into hiddenness, they withdraw, they are simply absent.”⁴⁴ It is “hiddenness, not in the sense of a preserving hiding away, but simply as being-gone.”⁴⁵ It is also and perhaps foremost, an obliviousness, a blindness to something that does not change and yet fades away from man’s consciousness. As the German philosopher says, “the apparently self-evident turns out, upon closer examination, to be understood least,”⁴⁶ and so “because it is too close to us and because we proceed in this way with everything close.”⁴⁷

⁴³ English translation from: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Grace of Zen: Zen Texts for Meditation*. London: Search Press, 1977: 47. Print; Original Japanese from: 白隠。《白隠和尚全集》。東京：龍吟社，1935。（白隠禅師坐禅和讃）

⁴⁴ Heidegger, Martin. *The Essence of Truth: On Plato’s Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013: 101. Print; Original German: “ein schicksalhaftes Geschehen, das da über die Menschen hereinbricht, ein Geschehen aber, das mit allem Seienden vor sich geht: es gerät in die Verborgenheit, es entzieht sich, das Seiende ist einfach weg.” From: GA 34:140.

⁴⁵ Ibid.^t: 101. Original German: “Verborgenheit, nicht im Sinne des aufbewahrenden Versteckens, sondern einfach Weg-sein.” From: GA 34: 140.

⁴⁶ Ibid.^t: 5. Original German: “wir das sch einbar Selbstverständliche im Grunde, bei näherem Zusehen, am allerw enigsten verstehen.” From: GA 34: 7.

⁴⁷ Ibid.^t: 5. Original German: “weil es uns zu nahe liegt und weil wir damit wie mit allem Näch stließen den umgehen” From: GA 34: 7.

The *lethe* affecting a person could be compared to the situation of a fish that has never left the water and thus is totally oblivious to the existence of this element, which remains unnoticed but is nevertheless central to the fish's existence. It is precisely because of its omnipresence that it is forgotten: the fish focuses its attention on other fish, on the surrounding algae or the sea floor, and the water remains too close to be seen.

The experience of the *lethe* can be best described using Heidegger's phenomenology developed in *Being and Time*, and its terminology. In particular, the opposition between the concepts of presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*) and readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*) will help us to accurately perceive the cause and effects of the *lethe*, that is, what its origin and purpose are. These two slightly technical terms will thus now be defined and put in relation with the aforementioned marine analogy.

A "readiness-to-hand" designates the way we commonly encounter the things that surround us in our daily lives. As the German etymology of the word implies (*Zu-handenheit*), we see them in their "handiness," that is, not as material objects but rather as tools that are what they are through the use we make of them. Heidegger gives us the example of a hammer: when we see a hammer in normal circumstances, we see it as a tool for nailing. We do not see it in its materiality, as a wooden and metallic object.⁴⁸ Our nature as human beings is inseparable from the universe we live in and from the possibilities it offers. To see things as ready-to-hand is to see them in their potentiality. Readiness-to-hand therefore is a mode of being resolutely turned toward the future, a future in which man will act upon the universe with "tools," just as he will himself be influenced by this universe, as he also can be seen as ready-to-hand by others.⁴⁹ Readiness-to-hand is thus man's primary mode of being in his everyday life. It allows him to

⁴⁸ Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Reprint edition. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008: 98. Print.

⁴⁹ This materialistic terminology could nonetheless mislead us to reduce the world to a series of controllable objects, giving us the false impression that a readiness-to-hand is a mere way to deal with "things." We must therefore keep in mind that the *lethe* is not limited to objects with a "handiness," but can affect everything, the environment in which we are "thrown" in particular. The water in which the fish swims has little "handiness," and yet the fish uses it to swim "along the paths of the sea" (Psa 8:8), even when oblivious to its existence.

use his environment and see its potential, allows him to focus all his attention on the use of “things,” helping him to progress in all the aspects of his material and intellectual life. This focus of his attention on the use of “things” rather than on their essence brings efficiency to his actions but this efficiency comes with a price. It can not only blind him to the nature of the things that he sees as ready-to-hand but also to the nature of his actions and to the nature of his link with his essential being as well.

Readiness-to-hand implies familiarity: only something recognized and identified in its potential use can be ready-to-hand. This familiarity is bound to intensify with time and progressively, other aspects of the thing become less and less noticeable, until they finally fall into oblivion. The present is then reduced to a set of potentialities. The Φύσις as a whole ceases to be accurately perceived and it is then seen as a mere set of tools. Temporality may nevertheless not be the primary cause of the *lethe*. Indeed, perhaps more powerful than the effects of time, it is the opening of the possibilities for things to become ready-to-hand that is the foremost source of the *lethe*. It is because of the presence of different things that possess a “handiness” in the fish’s surroundings that it does not perceive the water. Without the possibilities for things to be ready-to-hand, only the water would remain, and it would be more likely to be seen. The “things,” and the being that observes them, both create a space, a clearing that reveals the possibilities of their potential use while concealing their nature, thereby also concealing a dimension of the facticity of the being that observes. Like a ray of light, it illuminates a portion of space but plunges its surroundings further into darkness. This shows that the *lethe* is not just a “side-effect” of our facticity but rather what allows us to act in the world, to be part of it in the first place.

The readiness-to-hand through which we see the world in its everydayness nevertheless presents a danger: an alienation from an “authentic” (as *eigentlich*) life. Engulfed in the everydayness of the universe, seeing it only as a set of usable objects and possibilities, we forget its nature, the nature of our essential being and of our destiny. Albeit more limited in scope, focusing on the blindness to being, Heidegger’s critique of modern technology can be directly related to this phenomenon.⁵⁰ This alienation can

⁵⁰ Heidegger, Martin. *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other*

nonetheless also be seen as a necessary part of our facticity and not as something restricted to the modern, technology-driven societies. This concealment or *lethe* is thus a necessary part of our nature as intentional beings but our temporality implies that this obliviousness is not always permanent and that it can be reversed.

An aspect of the *lethe* described here nonetheless differentiates it from the ones that will be found in the (hi)story that will be unfolded here. In the case of Heidegger's hammer, the *lethe* concerns a handy object among others and, as the author of *Being and Time* tells us, a particular event such as the breaking of the hammer can lead us to break the spell of the readiness-to-hand and the *lethe*. The *lethe* that one needs to break in order to be able to open the doorway toward the (hi)story of language and being is what can be called an "environmental *lethe*": one that concerns an inescapable element of our surroundings, an element that cannot spontaneously break like the hammer or be contrasted with other similar elements. Coming back to the aforementioned marine analogy, an example of such *lethe* would be the obliviousness of the fish to the water. For the fish, this *lethe* is significantly different than the one concerning the smith and the hammer, as the nearly inescapable nature of the water renders it more familiar than anything else. It also makes a contrast with another related element impossible without the emergence of a new environment, without the fish leaving the water and being plunged in the air, for example.

The *lethe* that prevents man from opening up the (hi)story of language and being, and from seeing the (hi)story of the world beyond the earthly narrative, is the obliviousness to the nature of language itself and to the nature of its relation to man's being. Language is indeed mostly seen in its readiness-to-hand, that is, as a coding system, a tool that can be used to communicate and express thoughts. This readiness-to-hand is a necessary part of the role language takes in human life but it also blinds men to the nature of language, to the fact that it represents far more than a mere tool that he can use. In order for man to perceive this presence-at-hand of language, the emergence of a contrasting element is nonetheless needed, one that will allow the *lethe* itself to be revealed to him.

1.4.2 Emergence

Men cannot escape their facticity, and their being is shaped by the environment into which they are thrown. This can clearly be seen in our languages, especially in the relatively recent field of cognitive linguistics, which remarkably shows how language is primarily based on metaphors and metonymies directly inspired by our earthly environment.⁵¹ The works of this field of research demonstrate that all that we do, say, or think, is always inextricably linked with our experience of the phenomenon and our embodiment. Our “ordinary consciousness is like an island and we are the islanders; we can imagine nothing beside our island, and although the sea is all around us we have no idea what it is or how far it reaches.”⁵² In order to transcend the limitations of our ordinary consciousness, that is, in order to have a present-at-hand view of our universe, we need to experience another facticity, to *step outside* (an *ek-stasis*) from one environment to another. In order for the fish to break the spell of his environmental *lethe*, he must experience something new, and stand in a new facticity.

The emergence of such a new environment can happen in different ways. It could be a creation *ex nihilo*: an island can appear in the water. It could be the result of a dis-discovery by the fish itself, like the dis-discovery of a freshwater river while coming from the sea. It could also be dis-closed by another party, such as the Deity. This emergence event disturbs the everydayness of the beings subjected to it. It changes their relationship with “things,” and their relationship with their environment as well. As a result of this event, their past or present environment can now potentially be contrasted with another, and thereby be seen as present-to-hand. The “thingness”⁵³ of the environment can emerge with the

⁵¹ Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press, 2008. Print; Lakoff, and Evans, Vyvyan, and Melanie Green. *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. Edinburgh University Press, 2006. Print.

⁵² Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen and Us*. Boston: Dutton, 1987: 110. Print; Original German: “Unser Tagesbewußtsein gleicht der Oberfläche einer Insel, die rings umspült ist vom Meer, dessen Wesen und Weite sich dem Vorstellungsvermögen der Inselbewohner entzieht wie alles, was unter der Oberfläche der Insel ist.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen und wir*. Frankfurt: FISCHER Digital, 2016: 112–113. Print.

⁵³ Cf Heidegger, Martin. *What Is a Thing?* Lanham: University Press of America, 1985: 7. Print.

environment itself but, as we will see, the event brings both concealment and unconcealment, *lethe* and *a-letheia*. The emergence constitutes the signal marking the start of an *ek-stasis*, through which beings are defamiliarized with their initial environment and are plunged into another, one that offers the possibility for a better view of their universe but that comes together with the risk of forgetting what they previously knew. The new place where they stand, the new station, can give them a clearer view of both the previous environment and the new. If, however, they throw themselves in a new everydayness without looking back, the change might be lost on them and the *ek-stasis* then becomes fruitless.

The emergence thus presents beings with a chance to increase their knowledge of the universe and of what their place in it is. This, however, does not come naturally: the emergence only takes the beings out from their facticity and toward another, without automatically leading them to gain a broader view. The going-out, the *ek-stasis*, opens up an opportunity for the beings to *think* but this opportunity can itself be concealed if men are caught in the endless possibilities offered by the everydayness of their world, seeing their world only as ready-to-hand, as a tool.

Man's reflection concerning his language and his facticity can be seen as the source of such an emergence: the emergence of language within language, of the house of being within the house of being. This emergence is not merely the result of the thought of the German philosopher who coined this *meta-phor* but rather the end of a long collective search that began at the dawn of man's thought. It was initiated when man began to reflect on the nature of his speech and on the nature of the languages (as *langues*) that surrounded him. This reflection led to the emergence of something new in man's world: language itself, as *langage*,⁵⁴ language in general, as seen independently from the peculiarities of all the languages through which it is manifested. Language then enters language as well as all languages. Language becomes represented as a meta-physical concept that can then be seen as an object

⁵⁴ The English word "language" is often used to express two different concepts, which are differentiated in French and many other languages. *Langage* designates language in general, whereas *langue* designates the particular languages that one knows: English, French, German etc. The distinction was popularized in academic circles following the work of the Swiss father of general linguistics: Ferdinand de Saussure.

and can become the subject of further reflection. Such reflection will not only concern man's speech or his languages but now also language itself.

Another stage of this emergence of language within itself occurs when man's reflection on language shows him that it is more than something he uses to trans-code his thoughts, and something more than a tool at his disposal. Trying to think without language or beyond language, man will ineluctably be confronted with the fact that the two are closely intertwined and that he may not discard his language as easily as he can discard a tool in his hand. The emergence shows him that language cannot be escaped, because, as said by Gadamer, language is "not just one of man's possessions in the world; rather on it depends the fact that man has a *world* at all."⁵⁵

Finally, the last decisive stage occurs when the meta-physical concept of language and the linguistic tradition associated with it are brought down back to the earth through *meta-phor*, combining the insights concerning the nature of language that were uncovered by the linguistical and philosophical scholarly tradition with the vision of the fact that language represents man's worldly facticity. Heidegger is the pathfinder through which this last stage finds its completion, through the meta-phorical insight that language is the house of man's being. This *meta-phor*, associated with the tradition from which it arose, marks the emergence of the house of being within the house of being, and the emergence of the world within the world. It can now not only become the subject of scholarly study but also be brought to the twilight between world and earth and become the key to the unveiling of the relation between language and man's essential being. Unveiled and brought to the twilight of world and earth, it can then become the source of an experience that may bring man closer to his essential being. This structure of the house, which is looped around itself, constitutes a

⁵⁵ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2 Revised edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004: 440. Print; Original German: "Die Sprache ist nicht nur eine der Ausstattungen, die dem Menschen, der in der Welt ist, zukommt, sondern auf ihr beruht, und in ihr stellt sich dar, daß die Menschen überhaupt Welt haben. Für den Menschen ist die Welt als Welt da, wie sie für kein Lebendiges sonst Dasein hat, das auf der Welt ist." From: Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gesammelte Werke: Band 1: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. A. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010: 446–447. Print.

“trick” allowing man to appear to escape the inescapable: it is as if he could see his house of being from the outside, as an object, but without requiring that he escape his own dwelling. Man can thereby break the *lethe* rendering him blind to his own linguistic facticity, without departing from it.

This emergence can become the source of an *ek-stasis*, but one that is partly “virtual,” as man does not really depart from his previous facticity: it is his world that changes rather than him, being looped around itself. The result is that man is nonetheless thrown into a somewhat different environment: a house of being that contains a representation of this same house of being. This *ek-stasis*, as it will be shown, will allow man to open up the door toward the (hi)story of language and being. It will give him a chance to change his relationship toward his facticity; to change his relationship with language, that is, his world, and perhaps lead him to an experience of his essential being. This change will not be forced upon him, or even simply be naturally given. It will rather require a resoluteness, and demand that he actively seizes the opportunity offered by this *ek-stasis*, which shows him the house that he inhabits.

1.4.3 The *ek-stasis* event and *a-letheia*

With the emergence, man is awakened from the slumber of everydayness, taken out and carried toward a new facticity, and he then stands facing a different world. This ek-static event can provoke a reaction from the one who experiences it. It gives him the opportunity to see a new contrast, one between different facticities: the two **stat-ions** between which he was trans-ported. This contrast could be spatial, if the new environment just lays at a distance, still visible, as the sea seen from the dry land, using the marine analogy. It could also be temporal, if all that remains of the previous stat-ion is the memory of its experience, as if the sea disappeared completely and could only be remembered. The contrast between environments is thus necessarily visible, either in time or space. It is nonetheless not necessarily seen. The reaction following the emergence is not predetermined, and it also depends on an act of will of the being made to step outside through the *ek-stasis*. Man is not only the product of the Φύσις. He is also empowered by the

Τέχνη. The earth and the world can indeed shape him, but he is not a plant, incapable of action:

In the flower, a necessary image brings itself out into a form, according to its environment (soil, water, light). The same goes for man. And just as a gardener, even though he cannot modify the flower that is in the bud, he is nevertheless responsible for the environment necessary for it to bloom. There is a difference, however: in man, contrary to a flower, this external environment is not alone to favor or impede its blooming. The flower is not responsible of an eventual malformation, but man, on the other hand, is, as in his case it depends on internal factors rather than external ones. When the seed planted in him is unable to sprout out, man can only partially blame external elements.⁵⁶

By being thrown into a new facticity, man is not given a gift but rather only a helping hand, an opportunity to progress on the path toward the manifestation of his essential being. Two choices are given to him, each reflecting a different attitude toward both his previous and his new environment, that is, toward the two stations: he can either leap or build a bridge between them.

By leaping, the being fails to seize the opportunity offered by the *ek-stasis*. The new environment is merely seen as a change in the tools that are available in front of him, new objects with which he will soon be acquainted. The being remains in his everydayness and the only change is that new elements seen from the new station joined what is already ready-to-hand to him. No contrast is

⁵⁶ TBA. Original German: "So wie in der Blume ein unbedingtes Bild sich auszeugen und Gestalt gewinnen möchte in der Welt der Bedingungen (Erde, Wasser, Licht), so auch im Menschen. So wie der Gärtner das in einer Knospe lebendige Bild nicht ändern kann, aber verantwortlich ist für die Bedingungen, unter denen ihr Wesen zur Gestalt aufblühen kann, so auch der Mensch für das in seinem Wesen lebendige Bild. Nur mit dem Unterschied, daß anders als bei der Blume beim Menschen die Gestaltwerdung nicht nur durch äußere Faktoren gefährdet oder gefördert wird. Die Blume ist nicht schuld an einer Deformation, wohl aber, insofern bei ihm nicht nur äußere, sondern auch innere Faktoren an der Gestaltwerdung beteiligt sind, der Mensch. Der Mensch kann nur zum Teil äußere Bedingungen dafür verantwortlich machen, daß er nicht der wird, der in ihm angelegt ist." From: Dürckheim, Karlfried. *Der Ruf nach dem Meister: Die Bedeutung geistiger Führung auf dem Weg zum Selbst*. Weilheim: O.W. Barth, 1972: 73. Print.

perceived, as the new facticity simply replaces the previous one, which falls into oblivion or is simply ignored if it is still present. What was meant to be learned is lost and the being leaps from stat-ion to stat-ion, forgetting the past ones and forgetting himself in the new, prisoner of everydayness, or, in the language of *Being and Time*, inauthenticity.

By bridging, on the other hand, the being seizes the opportunity given by the *ek-stasis*. He shatters the shackles of everydayness and sees the two environments in contrast, in their presence-at-hand. He decides to put the two stat-ions in relation, contemplating what differentiates and what unites them. The previous environment that enfolded him becomes perceivable through the realization of the “environmentness” of the environment, similar to the way dust suspended in the air can make us perceive the air, and its movement, which would otherwise be imperceptible. The bridging does not reveal the being’s present facticity but rather the one he previously knew. But it is the new one that unveils the contrast between the two and allows him to see that he was blind, but now can see. Isolated from each other, each one of the stat-ions leaves man in a state of blindness to his facticity and thus also to himself and his destiny. It is only when the stat-ions are put in tension with one another that they can bring him light, as two pieces of flint struck one against another, producing sparks that enlighten his surroundings and unconceal the space where he stands: “On the essential level, it is precisely at the very moment when you are separated from that which is dear to you and accept the unacceptable, that a divine Love can invade you and give you shelter. Then, in the midst of sadness and isolation, you are suddenly filled with joy and peace.”⁵⁷ Here lies the purpose of the bridging.

In choosing the bridging, the being subjected to the *ek-stasis* shows that he is open to receive the lesson offered by the transformation and ready for the unconcealment of his past facticity. The following quote from Dürckheim, concerning the Zen tradition, can also explain the essence of the *ek-stasis*: “We shall never understand what Zen is about if we try to break it down into a theory — in other words, if we stand back and try to be objective.

⁵⁷ Dürckheim, quoted in: Goettmann, Alphonse. *The Path of Initiation*. N.p.: Theosis Books, 2009: 36–37. Print.

From a distance, there is no such thing as Zen.”⁵⁸ This is true not only concerning Zen but also concerning our vision of the universe: as man’s essential being is something that must be experienced, rather than simply seen, man then must begin his journey in the *lethe*, oblivious to the present-at-hand nature of his universe and of himself, so that he can focus on the experience of its readiness-to-hand. It is only after it has become familiar and has left the horizon of man’s conscious awareness that it can be unconcealed through an *ek-stasis*. From a distance, there is no essential being. Man therefore needs to stand in it first, being blind to its nature, so that the nature of this experience can then be revealed through the distancing brought by the transport to a new station. The *lethe* gives place to *a-letheia* (ἀ-λήθεια), the undoing of the *lethe*⁵⁹, as both “un-concealment” and “truth” (the more common translation of the word ἀλήθεια). As remarked by Dürckheim: “the peasant knows silence better than the man engulfed in city life. However, to be deprived of the silence of nature induces a nostalgia of silence that brings him back to deeply experience it, whereas the man who is still close to nature tastes this silence as something obvious.”⁶⁰ Here lies the purpose and necessity of the *ek-stasis*. The experience of both the earth and the world requires contrast in order to counter the *lethe* that pulls everything into oblivion. *Lethe* and *a-letheia* are the two pillars allowing man to build and to have a world, and to experience the Φύσις. Socrates is said by Plato to have been pondering this complementary nature

⁵⁸ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen and Us*. Boston: Dutton, 1987: 9. Print; Original German: “Es gibt keine Einsicht in das Wesen des Zen für den, der das Einzusehende im Raum des theoretisch Begreifbaren und also in sachlich objektiver Distanz sucht. Denn in dieser Distanz gibt es überhaupt kein Zen.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen und wir*. Frankfurt: FISCHER Digital, 2016: 14. Print.

⁵⁹ The ἀ- at the beginning of the word ἀλήθεια has been interpreted by Heidegger as a privative prefix. This interpretation of ἀλήθεια, more commonly translated as “truth,” as originating from ἀ-λήθεια, “un-concealment,” is far from certain. No matter whether this etymological link is itself true or not, it nevertheless becomes the source of valuable insights through the thought of Heidegger.

⁶⁰ TBA. Original German: “Der Bauer weiß mehr um Stille als der, den städtisches Leben verschlingt — aber der, dem das Leben die natürliche Stille versagt, ist oft auch der Sehnsucht nach Stille und so ihrer tieferen Erfahrung viel näher als der, der — noch eins mit der Natur — sie ganz selbstverständlich genießt.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Vom doppelten Ursprung des Menschen*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag, 2009: 44. Print.

of opposites, soon before returning to the earth:

Socrates sat up on the bed, bent his leg and rubbed it with his hand, and as he rubbed he said: “What a strange thing that which men call pleasure seems to be, and how astonishing the relation it has with what is thought to be its opposite, namely pain! A man cannot have both at the same time. Yet if he pursues and catches the one, he is almost always bound to catch the other also, like two creatures with one head. I think that if Aesop had noted this he would have composed a fable that a god wished to reconcile their opposition but could not do so, so he joined their two heads together, and therefore when a man has the one, the other follows later. This seems to be happening to me. My bonds caused pain in my leg, and now pleasure seems to be following.”⁶¹

The unconcealments induced by contrasts are at the center of every aspect of our lives. Our world exists only through this play and this tension between opposites. The *lethe* is necessary for the *a-letheia* to be manifested, as what matters is not so much the result as the unconcealment itself.

The emergence of the house of being within the house of being, and of the world within the world, is the result of a long maturation process starting at the dawn of both Eastern and Western thought, with the beginning of man’s reflection on language, and reaching an apex through Heidegger’s *meta-phor* and the thought associated with it. This emergence offers man an opportunity to experience an *ek-stasis* and an *a-letheia*. He is, through this *ek-stasis*, taken

⁶¹ Plato. *Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997: 52. Print. Original Greek: “ὁ δὲ Σωκράτης ἀνακαθίζομενος εἰς τὴν κλίνην συνέκαμνέ τε τὸ σκέλος καὶ ἐξέτριψε τῇ χειρὶ, καὶ τρίβων ἅμα, ὡς ἄτοπον, ἔφη, ὦ ἄνδρες, ὅκει τι εἶναι τοῦτο ὃ καλοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἡδύ: ὡς θαυμασίως πέφυκε πρὸς τὸ δοκοῦν ἐναντίον εἶναι, τὸ λυπηρόν, τὸ ἅμα μὲν αὐτῷ μὴ ἔλκειν παραγίγνεσθαι τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, ἐὰν δὲ τις διώκῃ τὸ ἕτερον καὶ λαμβάνῃ, σχεδὸν τι ἀναγκάζεσθαι αἰεὶ λαμβάνειν καὶ τὸ ἕτερον, ὥσπερ ἐκ μιᾶς κορυφῆς ἡμμένῳ [60ξ] δὴ ὄντε. καὶ μοι δοκεῖ, ἔφη, εἰ ἐνενόησεν αὐτὰ Αἴσωπος, μῦθον ἂν συνθεῖναι ὡς ὁ θεὸς βουλόμενος αὐτὰ διαλλάξαι πολεμοῦντα, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἐδύνατο, συνῆψεν εἰς ταῦτόν αὐτοῖς τὰς κορυφάς, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα ὃ ἂν τὸ ἕτερον παραγένηται ἐπακολουθεῖ ὕστερον καὶ τὸ ἕτερον. ὥσπερ οὖν καὶ αὐτῷ μοι ὅκειν: ἐπεὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ δεσμοῦ ἦν ἐν τῷ σκέλει τὸ ἀλγεινόν, ἦκειν δὴ φαίνεται ἐπακολουθοῦν τὸ ἡδύ.” From: Plato. “Phaedo 60b.” *Perseus*. Web. 23 Sept. 2015.

from a house of being which is only perceived in its readiness-to-hand, with language seen as a tool that he can use, and then plunged into a house of being that contains a present-at-hand representation of itself, a house within a house. This re-presentation is nonetheless not limited to a mere metaphor: the house within the house includes the philosophical and linguistic tradition that ultimately gave birth to this metaphor. It shows man that language fundamentally is something that he inhabits and that shapes him as much as he can shape it. This re-presentation also shows him that language is something that enfolds him and from which he cannot simply escape, because his world needs the house, as the house is what provides the space where his world can appear and be seen. Furthermore, the *ek-stasis* caused by the emergence can become the source of another revelation: it can lead him to the unconcealment of the nature of his relationship with language, of the role it plays in his being, and or the role it can play in man's walk on the path toward his essential being. As described earlier, this nonetheless requires that man take a stand regarding the emergence. Following the transition between the two stat-ions of language, the men subjected to this *ek-stasis* are thus presented the aforementioned choice: either to leap between stat-ions or to build a bridge between them.

First, men can simply leap between stat-ions, that is, let themselves be carried to this new facticity, where the house of being appears within itself. The representation of the house and of the tradition that gave birth to it is then seen as just another "thing" that is part of their world and can be used by them. The readiness-to-hand of the house remains, both as a "thing" within the house and as the dwelling in which they are thrown. This second aspect is the essence of the house but it remains unnoticed, as its inhabitants are still caught in the everydayness of their dwelling. The house of being is not seen in its presence-at-hand, and more importantly, its relation to man's being remains concealed: the house is a mere poetic metaphor that expresses a conception of language among others, and that is not linked with man's experience of the earth. The doorway toward the (hi)story of language and being thus remains closed, as the nature of the house must be seen and experienced in order for this (hi)story to enter man's life. This (hi)story may be read but it cannot guide man's walk toward his essential being, as the role that the house plays in his

being remains concealed.

The men subjected to the *ek-stasis* nevertheless also have the possibility to bridge the two stat-ions, that is, to witness and appropriate the contrast between their previous facticity and the new one. They may thereby come to see the nature of the *lethe* that affected them; see that they always lived in a house of being and that this house until then remained unseen. More importantly, the contrast between the two stat-ions, the house without a representation of the house and the one that has one, can also reveal a fundamental aspect of the link between man's language and his being.

The house can indeed be re-presented within the house. Language can be re-presented "using" language. It can become an "object" within it, one that can be observed, studied, and shaped, but the same house is also what enfolds man. It is what opens up the world where the re-presentation of the house itself becomes possible. It is also what allows man to be a human being, someone different from the animals that cannot access any house of being. This duality reflects the paradoxical nature of man's relation to language, a relation that is at the center of his being. It can be seen as an example of what the professor of cognitive science Douglas Hofstadter calls a "strange loop,"⁶² which he defines as:

An abstract loop in which, in the series of stages that constitute the cycling-around, there is a shift from one level of abstraction (or structure) to another, which feels like an upwards movement in a hierarchy, and yet somehow the successive "upward" shifts turn out to give rise to a closed cycle. That is, despite one's sense of departing ever further from one's origin, one winds up, to one's shock, exactly where one had started out. In short, a strange loop is a paradoxical level-crossing feedback loop.⁶³

This can be compared to the so-called "Droste effect" (Cf. Fig. 3), similar to what one sees when looking at two facing mirrors: an in-

⁶² Hofstadter developed this concept in: Hofstadter, Douglas R. *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*. New York: Basic Books, 1999. Print.

⁶³ Hofstadter, Douglas R. *I Am a Strange Loop*. New York: Basic Books, 2008: 101. Print.

finite series of reflections is produced, with the image of the mirrors contained in their own image through an infinity of progressively smaller images.

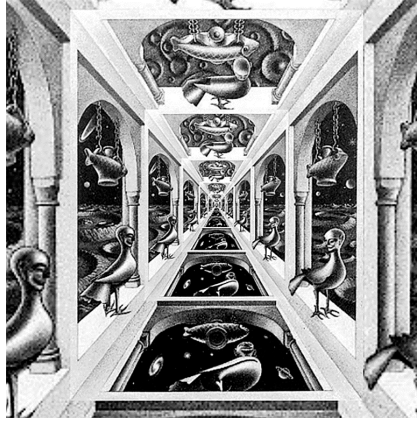


Fig. 3 The Droste effect.

The house can indeed re-present itself, and re-present itself re-presenting itself etc, in a potentially infinite chain of meta-representations. The nature of man's relationship with his house of being, and therefore with his being itself, is perplexing but nonetheless beautiful. What it can unconceal is the fact that **the path toward the appropriation of man's being is to be found within the house of being: it lays hidden within man's language, and it is thus in his own language, and the works carved in his language that he may find a way to appropriate his essential being.** It is by plunging himself into the re-presentations of the house, in the reflections produced by its strange-loop structure, that man may begin his initiation, the walk toward his destiny. Man's quest for his essential being thus needs to begin in his own dwelling, in his world, rather than in the heavens, on the earth, or in something that would transcend all the elements of his universe. The way is there. It lies in front of him, waiting to be trodden.

Through this unconcealment brought by the *ek-stasis*, man may finally open the door toward the (hi)story of language and being. He may indeed see that this (hi)story represents a way toward the fulfilling of his destiny. He needs to plunge into his

own dwelling, in the loop it forms, so that he may see the role it plays in this destiny. The only element now missing is a source of materials, that is, a part of the house of being from which he will start to unveil this (hi)story. Such a source will here be found in one of the traditions carried by language from the dawn of our history.

The description of the nature of the *ek-stasis* process given in the previous pages will not only be used to examine the present *ek-stasis*, the one opening the doorway to the (hi)story of language and being. It will indeed also form the backbone of this (hi)story itself. As a chariot's wheel transporting man on the path, a wheel whose strength depends on the harmony between the spokes and the empty space around them, between language and what lies beyond it, the (hi)story of language and being can be seen as a journey between different **stat-ions** of language. These **stat-ions** will represent stages of its development, worldly *loci* where man will be brought by the vehicle and **stand** for a period of time, waiting for a chance to appropriate his new facticity and to perceive the purpose of the *ek-stasis*. Tensions between these stat-ions will be the source of a series of unconcealments of different paths leading man to a single **destin-ation**: the experience and appropriation of his essential being. Man will be given an increasingly clearer sight of the way toward this destin-ation through the progressive unveiling of the relation between language and his being. The series of *lethe* that hold sway of man's world will progressively fade away, and a corresponding series of *a-letheia* will, in an increasingly more explicit manner, invite him to take the final step toward the experience he is called to initiate and embrace. Each new stat-ion, and each *ek-stasis*, will thus represent a major change in man's house of being, guiding him toward his destiny, which is to become a conscious instrument of divine being.

In order for man to see the light of his essential being, he must nonetheless first be plunged into the darkness of the *lethe*. Only then may the *a-letheia* occur, not merely giving him the light itself but rather a sight of the difference between light and darkness and giving him the possibility to appropriate the tension between the two. This need for contrast can also be seen concerning man's relationship with his essential being: the end of the vehicle's journey thus is not man's destin-ation. This destin-ation is rather to be found on the path itself, as something else, something beyond

both the vehicle and the path on which it travels. In order to find this destination, man must first come to perceive the nature of the vehicle into which he has been thrown, and he must see the road on which it takes him. It is in the midst of his house of being itself that the path toward his essential being may be found, the house that has been built by his forefathers and that he received as an inheritance. Man's house comes as a tradition and it is in this tradition that he must first search the path. Only then may he perceive the way toward his destination.

1.5 Tradition as a path toward essential being.

If man accepts the guidance offered by the pathfinders, he may then finally begin to see the essence of the world into which he is thrown. He may begin to see language as something more than a tool at his disposal, seeing it as something that allows him to be; a house that opens up a space where the house can itself emerge, forming a strange-loop in which man is caught but that also allows him to transform his relationship with being. The pathfinders nonetheless only guide him to the threshold of his world, showing him that the way toward his essential being is to be found within the house itself, in his language, which includes all the works created inside this house. In order to appropriate his essential being, man will first have to discover his own home.

The perception of the essence of the house is thus only the beginning of the way. Most of the world itself remains in darkness, waiting to be discovered by men who are taking upon themselves the responsibility of its unveiling and of its revelation to their fellow men. The house must be lit, in both of its dimensions: first, in space, that is, the physical extent of the house and of all the things that it shelters. Secondly, in time, that is, in the continuity between its past, present, and future, from its origin until its end. Only then may its fullness be revealed; the role it plays in man's being be known, and its place in his destiny be seen.

The exploration of man's world can begin from different paths, as any language and any part of these languages can become its starting point. Language is the house of being, and the house of

being is thus made *with* language. Each one of its two aspects, the technical “language” and the poetical “house of being,” can shed light on the other. Investigations of language thus can bring light and unveil new parts of the house of being. But language only exists through its manifestations, through the appearance of “works” carved in language. Man can thus only explore his world either by himself creating such works or by examining the work of others, the work of those who dwell or dwelt in his house of being.

Language is the vehicle of a tradition, a storehouse of literature, songs, poems, (hi)story, and discourses. It is also a tradition in itself: it represents the work of men who lived thousands of years ago, who through *poiesis* crafted words and sentences that they transmitted to other men and that were in turn given as an inheritance to their descendants, up to the present day. Scientific disciplines, such as comparative and historical linguistics, can help man explore an increasingly greater part of the world: not only the house of being that he inhabits, but also the houses inhabited by others. The technical exploration of language will nonetheless always be limited by the extent of the tradition. Such technical research will indeed never allow man to see some of the most crucial aspects of his dwelling, such as its link with his being and his destiny. These questions are located outside the horizon of linguistics and rather fall into the domain of the philosophers, but philosophers have few means besides their imagination to answer these questions. Their *logos* may help them devise clever hypotheses but sooner or later, the philosopher has to face a reality that is difficult to accept: that his *logos* itself is deeply intertwined with tradition, the tradition of his language, the house of being whose very nature he seeks. Language is what opens up his world but it is also the only “thing” that can show him the world itself. This strange-loop in which every man who seeks to perceive the nature of his dwelling is caught shows that man cannot escape tradition. His *logos*, by which he hoped to escape tradition to instead rely on himself, will ultimately show itself to be based on a tradition, passed on as a continuous chain from the dawn of the people that has built this tradition.

Confronted with the truth of the inextricable nature of tradition, man may then **decide to stop to wrestle against it, seeing that this tradition is not something that impedes his walk toward his essential being but rather is what al-**

lows his journey in the first place. If he clearly sees the nature of the tradition from which his house of being originates, he may cease to try to escape it and begin to embrace it. When the house is seen as both the source of man's being and as a tradition inherited from his ancestors, he may then see that the key to what he yearns for may be found in what he previously rejected as mere *mythos*.

Language itself is part of man's tradition but the tradition is also extended in the manifestations of language, that is, in acts of speech or in writings. The men who lived in distant lands and remote times have not only passed on their language but also works made *in* language: orally transmitted stories or books on parchments, tablets, and palm leaves. These works are part of man's world. They have contributed to shaping its structure and thereby also contributed to making the dwellers of the house who they are. The exploration of these works may thus also lead him to an exploration of his world, as man, the works, and the world are all three united through the same tradition, and they are all sheltered within the walls of a house of being.

The works handed over through tradition are nonetheless not all of equal value to the man whose purpose is the uncovering of the nature of his essential being. Among these, works can be found that were created to present mankind with a full view of their world, explaining the origin, the destination, and the end of language; and its link with man's being. Such works may do so using different types of approaches, and be more or less straightforward in their depiction of man's world, but they constitute a remarkable material from which man could extract precious elements helping him unveil the nature of his world and the role it plays in his destiny. Among these works, the biblical narrative would certainly be the most obvious choice for those whose home is located within the so-called Western civilization, as the range and precision of its description of language are on par with its general influence upon Western culture as a whole. The nature of this tradition, however, must first be brought to light before one can embark on the journey of the unveiling of the (hi)story of language and being from the point of view of the biblical narrative.

1.6 The nature of the biblical tradition

The Bible is among a handful of works that have shaped the lives of a large part of mankind for millennia. On an earthly level, it is a fairly long compendium of texts, written by dozens of scribes across centuries, in different regions of the Middle East and Europe. It originates from vastly different cultures and covers almost every type of literary texts: poetry, prayers, prose, historical accounts, law, prophecy, proverbs, and others. Furthermore, the biblical text is itself written in three different languages, beginning in Hebrew, followed by several Aramaic parts, and finally ending in Greek.

The Bible is also a narrative that describes the becoming, growth, and completion of a universe. One of the most striking peculiarities of this narrative is that it endeavors to recount the story of its own genesis. The narrative contains the narrative of its own origin. It tells us how the Bible came to become the narrative that we have received and can now explore. Furthermore, it also recounts the story of the very languages in which it is written. It aims to be a historical narrative situated within history: both a window giving sight of the universe and a mirror showing us in its midst. It presents itself as a divinely revealed outline of human history, which is itself contained in history and exerts an effect on it. According to the narrative itself, the relationship between the Bible, its universe, and the universe of the reader thus forms another strange-loop, similar to the one linking man to his house of being. It implies a conflation of the universe of the narrative and of the one of the readers: the universe in which the reader is thrown is equated with what this reader sees when he reads the narrative. The narrative, in turn, itself describes the universe in which the reader interprets the Bible, and it thereby forms a “tangled hierarchies” in which there is no objective interpreter and interpretee: both observe and interpret each other equally.

From the point of view of the narrative, the universe and the Bible thus cannot be untangled, as they are inextricably linked to each other. Why is this worthy of mention? Because it shows that the surface of the text, its earthly dimension, is deeply intertwined with its worldly narrative. In particular, it implies that the languages in which the text is written are themselves part

of the (hi)story of language within the narrative, a fact that will play an important role in the following (hi)story. Furthermore, the language(s) of the reader, which may differ from the original languages of the narrative, will also affect this (hi)story, as it does not distinguish the universe of the narrative from the one of those who plunge themselves in the text. Ricoeur said that any text ultimately helps us to interpret our self.⁶⁴ The particular structure of the biblical narrative considerably accentuates this, if one accepts to receive and welcome it rather than to analyze it, as it is a narrative that aims at recounting the (hi)story of man's being including the reader himself. The biblical tradition can thus be seen as more than a description of a universe and of its population, seen as mere objects: the journey of language that it depicts can also appear as a path guiding us like it guides the men within this narrative, regardless of our attitude toward the nature of this tradition, viewing it as "revealed truth" or not. More than this, the strange-loop structure can also be seen as an invitation for us to not simply be spectators of the narrative universe but rather to become actors in it, by entering ourselves on the path it describes. This is what Dürckheim invited us to do:⁶⁵ to experience this tradition rather than to simply observe it. Only then can the narrative lead us to our own destin-ation, which is the experience and appropriation of our essential being. This will nonetheless demand that we see the narrative of the world; the narrative of language that is concealed by the earthly biblical narrative. Fortunately, *poiesis* and *metaphor* represent ideal tools to uncover the (hi)story of language and being from the biblical narrative.

⁶⁴ Ricoeur, Paul. *Essais d'hermeneutique Vol. 2, Du texte à l'action*. Paris: Points essais edition. Paris, 1998: 115. Print.

⁶⁵ See the following declaration of Dürckheim, which was already quoted in the introduction: "There is an urgent need to penetrate the Bible other than through scientific and rational exegesis. If God is the beyond, an external comprehension of the texts will never allow us to discover the real content, and it is better to be silent! We must enter upon the Way, unveil that which is hidden and become children of God, but nothing happens when we do it mentally or through some intellectual adherence! A living faith makes the believer listen to the mystery which speaks within." From: Goettmann, Alphonse. *Dialogue on the Path of Initiation: An Introduction to the Life and Thought of Karlfried Graf Dürckheim*. New York: Globe Pr Books, 1991. N. pag. PDF.

1.7 The (hi)story of language and being through the biblical tradition: from narrative to meta-narrative

The Bible forms a narrative that is focused on the earthly and the heavenly. It tells us the (hi)story of the creation as a set of events happening on the earth, beneath the skies. It tells us of what man and God do in it. It seldom, however, talks to us concerning the world, concerning the meta-physical dimension of the biblical universe. This world is nonetheless very much present, as a watermark on each page of the book. It is what carries man all along the narrative, as an invisible chariot that guides him on the path he treads. The world of the biblical universe can be seen through its earthly manifestations: the narrative does not describe language (as *langage*) itself but it tells us of the languages (as *langues*) of mankind and of their use. Language is a worldly, meta-physical concept, which is manifested on earth as particular instances of language use: sounds, writings, carvings, gestures, which are all ex-pressed with physical matter, located in space and time, that is, on the earth, under the skies.

The world of the narrative can thus be inferred and reconstructed from the imprint it leaves in the earthly narrative. This is what allows us to not only tell the story of the languages of this universe but also the story of language itself, as a whole: its origin, life, and *telos*. Such a talk would represent a meta-discourse on the narrative, the prefix “meta” here meaning that it aims at being an account of the meta-physical, worldly counterpart to the earthly and heavenly narrative, which focuses on the material and spatio-temporal universe.

The meta-discourse first is meant to help man make sense of the earthly events described by the narrative, by organizing its universe into a series of meta-physical structures, creating a model for what cannot be apprehended by the senses but can be seen by the mind, in the world. Without a deliberate reflection, man will not see the “life of language” while reading the narrative, nor will he see the link between language and being. Only by uncovering a meta-discourse about language, following the traces of the manifestations of language use in the narrative and confronting them with the findings of the pathfinders who built the modern tradi-

tion, can man see what language represents. The genesis of such a meta-discourse would naturally tend to occur in the language of the Τέχνη, the language of reflection and abstraction, and the language of modern scholarship. The Τέχνη is indeed needed in order for man to perceive what lies beyond his sensory capabilities. It gives him the tools needed to reconstruct the world of the universe, as a movement going upwards, from the physical toward the meta-physical, from the earthly foundation of the world toward the heavens. This movement, although natural and even necessary, nonetheless presents the same dangers as the meta-physical in general, as described in the previous pages. The genesis of the meta-discourse can either occur as the result of a *poiesis*, a transfer from the earth toward the world, or it can simply be the product of the upward movement of construction of the world, where the basis of the world, what is closer to the earth, itself serves as the basis of a further edification of the world, which grows farther and farther away from the earth.

This meta-discourse is a meta-physical construction, which thus is naturally alienated from experience, from the earth. As it was described earlier, an uncontrolled elevation of the world can nonetheless cause it to be severed from the earth, which is its source. This alienation then tends to transform the world into a meaningless meta-physical play, a groundless set of construction with elements that are not grounded in the Φύσις. This play can in turn lead man to fail to perceive the world's purpose, which is to guide man in the appropriation of his essential being, an appropriation that must come as an earthly experience initiated by a worldly vision, something impossible if the world has been severed from the earth.

The meta-discourse can become the source of such an alienation of the world from the earth. It can grow and have a life of its own. It can become the source of its own becoming, thereby leading to a forgetting of its source, which mainly is the universe of the narrative.⁶⁶ Man then loses sight of the origin of the narrative,

⁶⁶ It should nonetheless be noted that because of the particular strange-loop structure of the biblical text, the meta-discourse can also take its source in meta-textual elements of the Bible, that is, in the nature of the text itself, rather than in the universe it describes. The text indeed not only tells us the narrative but also gives us a series of hints for the reconstruction of the world of the biblical universe. The text is, for example, written in three different

which arose as a poetic, worldly expression of the experience of the numinous. If the meta-discourse is severed from experience from which it finds its origin, it will not only fail to reflect the nature of the Φύσις but also fail to contribute to man's fulfillment of his destiny, which is to "unfold its own nature to its maximum possibility."⁶⁷ The meta-discourse is meant to unfold the narrative. The narrative, on the other hand, is meant to unfold man's being and to be the source of a return to the earth and an appropriation of the experience of the numinous. Both are parts of man's destiny; they are meant to help him unfold his own nature:

What is man? What is he intended to be? Intrinsically — that is to say, in his essence — man is an aspect of Divine Being, whose purpose is to manifest itself in him and through him. Just as flowers and animals in their own way reveal Divine Being, so also must man reveal it in the way of man. He can only be 'right' when his life-form, with all its forces, fulfils the destiny that dwells within him as his essential being.⁶⁸

To become a manifestation of divine being is an experience and not a mere meta-physical construction. Just as the narrative must become the source of an experience, rather than just be read, so is

languages, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, with each one of them representing a language that is part of the world of the narrative, and whose emergence plays a part in the (hi)story of language and being. The meta-discourse can also spring from other meta-textual elements, such as the structure of the text, and even the writing systems in which it is written, as according to its strange-loop structure, the text itself is seen as the product of the narrative universe, and therefore the glyphs with which it is written also represent the languages and the world of this universe.

⁶⁷ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971: 11. Print; Original German: "Wie alles, was lebt, dazu bestimmt ist, sich voll zu sich selbst zu entfalten, so auch der Mensch." from: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Der Alltag als Übung: vom Weg zur Verwandlung*. Bern: Hans Huber, 1962: 7. Print.

⁶⁸ Ibid.^t: 13. Original German: "Was aber ist der Mensch eigentlich und im Grunde, und was ist seine Bestimmung? Im «Grunde», das heißt in seinem *Wesen*, ist der Mensch eine Weise des göttlichen Seins, das in ihm und durch ihn in einer ganz bestimmten Lebensgestalt offenbar werden will in der Welt. So wie die Blume in der Sprache der Blumen, das Tier in der Sprache der Tiere, so soll der Mensch in der Sprache des Menschen zeugen vom göttlichen Sein. Und «recht» ist der Mensch nur soweit, als seine Lebensform mit allen in ihr wirksamen Kräften diese Bestimmung des Menschseins erfüllt. Sie *lebt* in ihm als *sein* «Wesen»." from Ibid.^o: 9–10.

the meta-discourse. Only then can it contribute to man's appropriation of his destiny and fulfill its purpose.

Fortunately, man can summon a force allowing him to bring the highly meta-physical back to the earth: *meta-phor*. Man can carry the meta-discourse to the twilight of world and earth, where the distinction between sensory experience and metaphysical representation is blurred. Through *meta-phor*, one can transform the meta-physical, technical language of the meta-discourse into a poetic meta-narrative. The elements of the worldly meta-discourse can indeed be seen as mirroring other elements, earthly ones, which are more directly related to our experience of the phenomenon. Such a meta-narrative can incarnate the meta-discourse using earthly elements, expressed in the twilight of world and earth. Whereas the poetic movement that gave birth to the meta-discourse was an upward movement, away from the earth, the meta-phenomenal movement is a downward one, bringing the meta-discourse down to the ground. The two movements are complementary, as the first unconceals the nature of the Φύσις, which can be seen through the separation between man's world and the earth it induces, while the second one allows man to use what was unconcealed to enrich his experience of the earth. Only in the world can man come to realize the nature of his essential being but the ideation of this essential being would be vain if it does not lead man to experience it directly, with his senses rather than as a mere worldly representation. The meta-discourse represents the worldly knowledge of colors that Mary learned in her room in the aforementioned thought experiment (See § 1.7). *Meta-phor*, on the other hand, represents the key unlocking this room and allowing her to go outside and to experience the essence of colors as an earthly phenomenon rather than as a series of purely worldly representations. Only at this moment does what she has learned really start to "make sense," that is, start to help her understand the nature of what she now experiences. In a similar fashion, the poetic movement represents the movement of representation and investigation of man's earthly experiences. Only in the world may he find their "meaning," but once higher layers of this meaning have been uncovered, they must be brought back to the earth through an opposite movement, *meta-phor*, so that world and earth can resonate with one another and thereby amplify the intensity of man's earthly experiences and the clarity or sharpness

of his world. Such a resonance would in turn lighten the path of man's destiny and make it harder for man to stray away from it.

Heidegger's metaphorical insight seeing language as the house of being, a place that we inhabit rather than a tool that we use, can become the starting point of the meta-narrative of language and being. It can help us bring the meta-physical concept of language, and its relation to being, back to the earthly foundation of the world: the construction of a shelter, which is one of man's most basic earthly need, a need that is felt by every man on earth, in the biblical universe and in our own. This *meta-phor* is not arbitrary but rather the result of a profound thinking process, mirroring man's true relationship with language, as something he contributes to creating but that also shelters him and shapes his view of the universe. Furthermore, this *meta-phor* will also carry other aspects of Heidegger's vision of language, and a large part of the scholarly tradition regarding its study. Through *meta-phor*, the biblical narrative can thus become the source of a technical meta-discourse on language and being, the product of an encounter between the biblical and the linguistical/philosophical traditions, a product that can then itself be trans-formed into a meta-narrative. This meta-narrative will be a (hi)story of the house of being of the biblical universe, telling how it is first constructed, by whom, and from what materials; how it grows and evolves into a village of tongues, sheltering different peoples; how the houses composing the village can merge or collapse and be left in ruins; how man interacts with his dwelling(s), and how these dwelling(s) affect his behavior and his relation to his being. This is the (hi)story of language and being that will be unfolded here, uncovering the world of the biblical narrative as a meta-discourse and then bringing it back to the earth so that it can be first told as a meta-narrative and then perhaps become the source of an experience.

The telling of this (hi)story can help man see something that would remain concealed by a purely technical, historical study of language. History and the other scientific disciplines indeed cannot answer the question of the purpose of language, as this question is tightly interlaced with the question of man's consciousness of his own destiny, which is something that falls outside the range of what can be studied by purely technical inquiries. Language is the house of being, our house, our home whose origin is unknown to us. Only traditions, finding their origin in experiences of the

numinous, give us attempts at an all-encompassing answer concerning both language and being, a vision of a complete universe describing mankind as a whole, from the first man until the last. When seen beyond dogmas and events and rather as the source of an experience, the biblical tradition offers us the opportunity of “a living faith,” one that “makes the believer listen to the mystery which speaks within.”⁶⁹ The tradition can thus become part of the unfolding of the destiny of its recipients, of us readers of the Bible, and do so without any imperative to either its historical validation or to the invocation of any authority of the text, seeing it as “revealed truth.”

The tradition is a gift from our forefathers, one that constitutes a helping hand guiding us on our path. The present work will pay homage to it while furthering the reflection that arose from it and that has been continued for at least twenty-five centuries. The (hi)story of language and being in the biblical tradition that will be told in the following pages is aimed at showing how the vision of the relation between language and being given by the biblical tradition can not only be the source of a clearer sight of the nature and essence of the house of being that we inhabit but also become the source of a guidance, leading us to an experience and appropriation of our essential being. Such an experience may nonetheless also demand **an experience of language** (as *language*)⁷⁰, as opposed to a mere reflection on language or a simple experience of language use (*langues*). Just as the reading of the narrative will not necessarily make someone a believer in the Deity, the reading of the following (hi)story will not directly give an experience of the nature of the house of being and of the role it plays in man’s appropriation of his essential being. Only if one is ready and willing to peer through the words and sentences and to open oneself up to the experience of the numinous that it points to may this (hi)story become meaningful. Other traditions may offer other paths, and their vision of language and being certainly would be worthy of being told, but ultimately, man’s **destin-ation** is the same, although it is known by many names.

⁶⁹ Quote from Dürckheim in: Goettmann, Alphonse. *The Path of Initiation*. N.p.: Theosis Books, 2009: 72. Print.

⁷⁰ That is, a readiness-to-hand of the house itself rather than a mere readiness-to-hand of the signs composing it.

Chapter 2

The creation episode

In this opening chapter of the (hi)story of language and being in the biblical narrative, the major passages describing the creation of language in the first book of the Scriptures, the book of Genesis, will first be reviewed. This narrative, once it has been interpreted under the light of Church tradition and its difficulties have been clarified, will later become the source of the beginning of the meta-narrative of language and being, aimed at uncovering the (hi)story of the world of the biblical universe. The portions of the book of Genesis that will be reviewed will nevertheless not be limited to the parts explicitly mentioning language: they will, in particular, also cover the creation of man, as he will be the main character of the (hi)story of language and being, and he will be the instrument through which divine being will be manifested through language. Man's fall from the garden of Eden will be recounted as well, as this event occurs as a direct consequence of the first "uses" of language, and it considerably affects mankind as a whole and throughout the narrative.

Following this, the meta-discourse and the meta-narrative concerning the creation episode will be developed, using the hints uncovered in the narrative to reconstruct the world of the biblical universe. The physical will become the source of the meta-physical, which itself will be brought back toward the earth and described through *meta-phor* as a series of physical events, shedding light on both earth and world and allowing the possibility for man to unveil the nature of his essential being.

This first *ek-stasis* of the narrative will mark the beginning of man as such, as the creature endowed with an *ego*, distinct from the animals. He will be taken from the naked earth and made to build and dwell in a world, in a house of being. This new facticity, this dwelling in the meta-physical world and not only on the physical earth, can then become the starting point of the unconcealment of man's essential being, as man begins to see the nature of the earth and its contrast with the world. This new dwelling will also give him the freedom to choose between right and wrong, good and evil, and the liberty to walk the path toward his destiny, or to deny and betray it, thereby determining the fate of his descendance. The first step, however, is to enter the narrative itself.

2.1 The narrative of the creation episode

The narrative begins in the book of Genesis, which recounts the creation of the universe, and of all creatures and the things that are found in it. The book opens with the famous words: "IN the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1¹). The narrative thus starts with a location in time, followed by a mention of the creator, *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים), the main Hebrew word designating God.² The first verse echoes with another creation account present in the Bible, the opening of the Gospel according to S^t John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Joh 1:1³). It opens with the same word as the Septuagint of Genesis⁴: Ἐν ἀρχῇ [En archêi]. The second word (archêi) possesses strong philosophical overtones in Greek, not only designating "the beginning" but also the first principle or element of the universe, its primordial constituent. More than this possible philosophical reference, the subject and tense of this sentence nonetheless appear to have a special significance: the Word, the *Logos*, would here seem to designate the

¹ "בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:" (Gen 1:1).

² The word has the peculiarity of being grammatically plural, a fact often interpreted as a subtle way to designate the triune God.

³ "Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος." (Joh 1:1).

⁴ The "Septuagint" is the oldest and most famous translation of the Old Testament in the Greek language. It was translated, according to tradition, by seventy Hebrew scholars in the 3rd century B.C.

second person of the trinity, Jesus Christ, which *was* already at the beginning. Contrary to the physical universe, the Word is thus not within time. It is not an element of the creation: it *was*, before space and time.

The narrative tells us that “God created the heavens and the earth.” It is not perfectly clear what the first element refers to, especially considering the fact that the seventh verse mentions the creation and naming of another kind of heavens: “And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.” (Gen 1:7–8⁵). Scholars like the Venerable Bede (A. D. 672 – 735)⁶ argue that the first heavens designate the invisible higher heavens, perhaps space itself, whereas the second one would be the starry sky. The second verse of the book can nonetheless help us understand the meaning of “the earth”: “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.” (Gen 1:2⁷). The translation of the Hebrew תָּהוּ וָבֹהוּ [tōhū wābōhū] by “without form and void” may be a little too literal, especially its second part, which seems to refer to a state of absence of order and of design but not necessarily an emptiness. The second element of the creation thus seems to be the physical matter out of which the universe would be shaped. But perhaps more interesting than the discovery of what is referred to by “the heavens and the earth” is the fact that God decided to create them together, simultaneously.

Following the creation of the first two elements, the first words spoken by God are recounted: “And God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.” (Gen 1:3⁸). St Augustine declares that there was no physical sound during this “ineffable” utterance,⁹ and he

⁵ וַיֵּשֶׁשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָרָקִיעַ וַיְבַדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לָרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לָרָקִיעַ וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָרָקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי: (Gen 1:7–8).

⁶ Bede, and Calvin B. Kendall. *On Genesis*. Liverpool University Press, 2008: 69. Print.

⁷ וְהָאֲרֶץ הָיְתָה תָּהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחָשְׁךָ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאֵר וַיִּהְיֶה־אֹר: (Gen 1:2).

⁸ “וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי־אֹר:” (Gen 1:3).

⁹ Augustine. *The Fathers of the Church: Saint Augustine: On Genesis*. Trans. Roland J. Teske. Washington, D.C: Catholic Univ of Amer Pr, 1991:

establishes a link between these first words and the Word mentioned in the Gospel according to St John.¹⁰ The Venerable Bede shares his interpretation that the Son is the person speaking here.¹¹ The question of the determination of which person of the trinity uttered these words, or the question of their “physical” nature, are nonetheless only of secondary importance to our subject here, and therefore a different approach will be used to interpret this passage, shifting away our attention from the light, which is the focus of almost all the commentaries on this verse, to instead examine the creation process at work here. Taking away the light that blinds our eyes, this verse becomes: God said, and there was.

The essence of this verse, thus reduced, seems to mark the establishment of a direct link between the utterance of the words “let there be,” and the creation of an object. This raises a question: why didn’t God say anything to create the heavens and the earth? It at least shows that words are not a necessary element of the creation process, but why then do the words “let there be” precede the creation of light? This “call to existence,” or “vocation,” as the Jesuit theologian Louis Alonso Schokel calls it,¹² has often been seen as a form of word-magic, a divine *abracadabra*¹³ where words are the key to an action. In modern times, the diffusion of the works of the philosopher of language J. L. Austin on the so-called “performative utterances” has tended to promote this view among scholars. Performative utterances are, as reflected by the title of Austin’s major work, *How to Do Things with Words*,¹⁴ utterances that perform an action in themselves. When someone takes an oath, the speaking of the words of the oath performs the action of “taking an oath.” In the case of the creation of light, however, there does not seem to be any direct and necessary link between word and action, contrary to the now common interpretation followed

156–157. Print.

¹⁰ Joh 1:1.

¹¹ Bede, and Calvin B. Kendall. *On Genesis*. Liverpool University Press, 2008: 73. Print.

¹² Schokel, Luis Alonso. *The Inspired Word: Scripture in the Light of Language and Literature*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1972: 31. Print.

¹³ An expression appearing to be from the Aramaic: אַבְרָא כְדַבְרָא, but which is often interpreted with the Hebrew sense of the word דָּבַר: “I create as I speak.”

¹⁴ Austin, John Langshaw. *How to Do Things with Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975. Print.

by John Searle and others.¹⁵ S^t Gregory of Nyssa offers a plausible explanation concerning the absence of words for the creation of the heavens and the earth by pointing out the absence of a medium where speech could be pronounced and heard,¹⁶ the medium being created at this exact moment. This seemingly naïve answer would nevertheless not explain the necessity of the uttering of words for later creations, forcing us to seek a more convincing explanation.

Searle may have been right when he called this verse a performative utterance, and only wrong concerning the action performed. The first word, יְהִי [yōhī], meaning “let there be,” may not have marked the creation of light through some sort of incantation but rather the creation of language itself, language brought to existence through its first use, accompanying the creation of light rather than initiating it. S^t Gregory of Nyssa says that the first words are a declaration of “the power of God coincident with his will.”¹⁷ He remarks that all utterances are directed to a listener and asks who could it be here?¹⁸ After dismissing the hypothesis that the Father could command himself, or that he would need words to communicate with the Son, S^t Gregory does not give a clear answer to his own question. The Bible, however, is self-referential in nature, intended to represent the universe within itself. It is meant to be an account of the creation and of the early history of the biblical universe, placed inside the creation and inside History. With this in mind, a possible answer to Gregory’s question might be that God addresses us all with his first words. The readers of the Pentateuch are his creation, and the book both his creation and an account of the creation. These words may thus be directly addressed to the future readers of the book of Genesis, showing the becoming of language and demonstrating its descriptive nature, language not being a technique of word-magic but rather the companion of an action.

The book continues: “And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the

¹⁵ Searle, John R. *Consciousness and Language*. Cambridge University Press, 2002: 170. Print.

¹⁶ Karfiková, Lenka, Scott L. Douglass, and Johannes Zachhuber. *Contra Eunomium II*. Leiden: BRILL, 2007: 104. Print.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.: 103–106.

light Day, and the darkness he called Night.” (Gen 1:4–5¹⁹). After the first appearance of language, the first explicit naming immediately follows. In order to name, however, God first had to divide. Just like he created the first two elements of the creation as a pair, the heavens and the earth, the first names are also given by pair: the day and the night. This naming would not have been possible without the prior division between the light and the darkness, and it seems, as S^t Augustine notices, that God “separated and ordered all things so that they could be distinguished and receive names.”²⁰ The bishop of Hippo also remarks that God did not create the darkness, as this word merely designates the absence of light,²¹ a fact that makes the first naming all the more interesting: the second name does not refer to something that “exists” but to an absence, making this absence “exist” as a concept, through its name. This event marks the appearance of a new type of conceptual and linguistic creation, the creation of concepts that do not refer to physical creations but rather to abstract, metaphysical ones. This fact might shed light on one of the difficulties of this passage: since the sun had yet to be created, what did the day and the night represent at that time? What was the difference between light and day, darkness and night? A possible answer would be that the naming operates a conceptual shift, differentiating the physical concept based on existence (light exists and darkness is the absence of light), from the temporal conception based on language: the day is the period when there is light, whereas night is the period when there is no light.

Ancient commentators have also pondered the question of the nature of the names given by God in this passage, as S^t Gregory of Nyssa who argued for a naturalist view: “Real things get their names by some significant sound in accordance with the nature and potential inherent in each,”²² a view similar to Plato’s, as it is exposed in the *Cratylus*.²³ No detail is given concerning the nam-

¹⁹ וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאֹר כִּי־טוֹב וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ : וַיִּקְרָא “אֱלֹהִים לָאֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד :” (Gen 1:4–5).

²⁰ Louth, Andrew, ed. *Genesis 1–11 (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2016: 8. Print.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Karfíková, Lenka, Scot Douglass, and Johannes Zachhuber. *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II*. Leiden: BRILL, 2007: 119. Print.

²³ Plato. *Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997: 101. Print.

ing process or the criteria used by the divine wordsmith, and all discussions on the matter are therefore condemned to remain pure speculations. The origin of names could nevertheless help determine their value: a name given by God would seem to necessarily be fitting, if not “natural,” while a name given by humans could at best be deemed fitting, and hardly “natural.” Other creations soon follow: the creation of the firmament by a separation of the waters; the creation of the dry land by the gathering of the waters; the creation of the plants, the sun, the moon, the stars, and then of the living creatures, the fish, the birds, the cattle, each “according to its kind.” On the sixth day, God then creates man, mankind, or simply Adam, as the Hebrew word אָדָם [ʾāḏām] covers all three meanings:

Then God said, “Let us make man [Adam] in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen 1:26–27, text in brackets added²⁴)

A great majority of translations translate אָדָם [ʾāḏām] as the name designating mankind rather than as a proper name. It naturally suggests that the name represents both but it should be noted that both Adam and Eve would only be “formed” in the second chapter,²⁵ and thus the two meanings are conflated at this point. Continuing our progression through the text, the first quoted word is already the source of abundant commentaries: נַעֲשֶׂה [naʿāseh] “let us make,” with a distinctively plural form of the verb. The consensus among eminent Christian commentators, from St Cyril of Jerusalem²⁶ to St Augustine,²⁷ is that it refers to the trinity,

²⁴ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדֹמוֹתֵינוּ וְיִרְדּוּ בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבַעֹרֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם: בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצַלְם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם: (Gen 1:26–27).

²⁵ Gen 2:7 and Gen 2:21.

²⁶ Yarnold, Edward. *Cyril of Jerusalem*. Psychology Press, 2000: 121. Print.

²⁷ Augustine. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Fairfield: 1st World Publishing, 2006: 272. Print. “Thou sayest not, ‘Let man be made,’ but let us make man. Nor saidst Thou, ‘according to his kind’; but, after our image

associated in its three persons to the creation of man. The rest of the sentence is even more intriguing and its meaning particularly puzzling: “make man in our image, after our likeness.” Can man be the image of God? A positive answer could appear blasphemous but S^t Thomas Aquinas tells us that “an ‘image’ is so called because it is produced as an imitation of something else,”²⁸ and he rightly remarks, basing himself on S^t Augustine, that “equality does not belong to the essence of an image.” The reflection of the moon on still water is not the moon itself, even if it is its image.²⁹ Man can thus be an image of God without being God or godly himself. This being said, a very convincing parallel concerning the nature of this likeness is brought forth by S^t Gregory of Nyssa, who notices the following verse in the fifth chapter of the same book.³⁰ “When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son *in his own likeness, after his image*, and named him Seth.” (Gen 5:3,³¹ emphasis added). The exact same words are used in the original text of both passage, something that can help us shed light on the nature of this similitude between God and man, indicating that the likeness is comparable to the likeness between a father and a son, who are not equal nor identical, but simply share a part of their own nature. The second part of the verse may also help us: “let them have dominion.” Just as God has dominion over all creation, man has been given power to reign over the animals, a power that has not been conferred to any other creature, making man unique among them.

The end of this passage then declares that “male and female he created them,” echoing the aforementioned binary nature of creation, the heavens and the earth, the day and night. It also presents us with a textual difficulty, as Eve would be formed from Adam’s rib only at the end of the second chapter (Gen 2:21). Origen argues that the female is mentioned and blessed by anticipa-

and likeness.”

²⁸ Aquinas, Thomas. *The Summa Theologica*. London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1917: 283. Print. (Q 93.1).

²⁹ This can be related to the Zen saying: 雲在青天水在瓶 (“The cloud is in the sky, the water is in the jar”), found in the 指月錄 [zhǐ yuè lù] (See “指月錄—卷09.” *Wikisource*. Web. 15 Mar 2016.).

³⁰ Karfíková, Lenka, Scott L. Douglass, and Johannes Zachhuber. *Contra Eunomium II*. Leiden: BRILL, 2007: 196. Print.

³¹ “וַיְחִי אָדָם שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאָת שָׁנָה וַיֹּלֶד בְּרֵמִיזוֹתוֹ כְּצִלְמוֹ וַיִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ שֵׁת.” (Gen 5:3).

tion.³² St Ephrem, on the other hand, states that Eve was created with Adam, being in his rib until the moment when God extracted and formed her later on.³³

Then, a more detailed proclamation of man's dominion over the plants and the animals follows. This proclamation has yet to be heard by Adam, who only receives the "breath of life" the next day. The tree of life and the tree of knowledge are then created in the midst of the garden of Eden, and man is charged "to till it and keep it" (Gen 2:15³⁴). Finally, the first communicative event between God and man is recounted: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'" (Gen 2:16–17³⁵). This verse may seem to imply that man already had access to language, which would then be considered natural rather than learned. It is nonetheless not necessarily the case, as Adam could have been commanded as man commands an animal, by uttering sentences in his direction, some of which may be understood by a domesticated animal like a dog without implying that the animal would really have a command of this language. In the first chapter of the book, God indeed exhorted the fish and birds to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth" (Gen 1:22³⁶), but it would be hard to conclude from this that these creatures "had" a language! Thus, in the same manner, Adam may have had only a limited, passive understanding of the command. The same command could also imply that man's capacity to reason was limited since he could not discern good from evil prior to having eaten the fruit of the second tree. But what was the purpose of this command, the first sentence heard by man in the narrative? A possible answer would be that this prohibition is expressed to give man the possibility to exercise his reason: he is now confronted with a continuous choice, either to obey or to

³² Louth, Andrew, ed. *Genesis 1–11 (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2016: 36. Print. (Origen, homilies on genesis 1.14).

³³ Ibid.: 36. (Ephrem, *On genesis* 1.29.2).

³⁴ "לְעֹבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ:" (Gen 2:15).

³⁵ "וַיֹּצִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל-הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכָּל עֵץ-הַגֶּן אָכַל תֹּאכַל: וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת: לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בְיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת:" (Gen 2:16–17).

³⁶ "וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הַיָּם בַּיָּמִים וְהָעוֹף יִרְבֵּי:" (Gen 1:22).

transgress, to do good or to do evil. Will he respect the divine command or will he violate it? With the power of free-will not only comes a responsibility but also a possibility as well: death. To be or not to be, this is also the choice presented to man. If he follows the Law, he will live, but if he transgresses it, he will die. This first command can be paralleled with Heidegger's early view of existence, in which the realization of the certainty of death is central to an authentic human life. Only by being-toward-death³⁷ (*Sein zum Tode*), and being conscious of his temporal nature, can man truly *be*. At this point in Genesis, however, death is only a possibility for man, and he has yet to make the choice between eternal life in Eden and a life ending with death. This question will be further examined at a later point, so as to respect the chronology of the book.

Following the first command, the naming of the creatures and the search for a helper to Adam takes place:

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him"³⁸ [כְּנֶגְדּוֹ]. So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him. (Gen 2:18–20, text in brackets and emphasis added³⁹)

³⁷ Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Reprint edition. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008: 296. Print; Original German from: GA 2: 335.

³⁸ The Hebrew text for what is translated as "fit for him," כְּנֶגְדּוֹ [kəneḡdō], is based on the root-word נ-ג-ד (nun-gimel-dalet) that expresses the idea of an opposition, of being set against something, that is, the establishment of a contrast. The declaration from the Deity can thus be interpreted differently compared to the aforementioned translation: the woman may not be something "fit for him," as something that would be useful to him, but rather be a counterpart to Adam. This counterpart establishes a contrast between male and female, as two poles that are the source of a tension from which mankind will sprout.

³⁹ "וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא טוֹב הָיִיתָ הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה-לּוֹ עֹזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ: וַיִּצָּר" יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן-הָאָדָמָה כָּל-חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֵת כָּל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיָּבֵא אֶל-הָאָדָם

This passage contains one of the major events related to language in the Bible: the naming of the animals, when Adam is charged by God to create names for certain creatures as they are brought to him. The details related to this event are scarce, leaving a lot to the hermeneuts to decipher. The rest of the narrative nonetheless teaches us that names have a special significance. The names given by God are not random. They are precise and have a purpose, starting from the name of the first man, about which S^t Gregory of Nyssa notices that it is both the general name for mankind and the proper name of the first man, seeing in this ambiguity “the Divine foreknowledge and power,” including all humanity in the first human.⁴⁰ While few would object that the names given by God are fitting the nature of what is named, the names given by man do not enjoy the same level of trust. In the present case, what criteria or process did Adam use to name the animals? Tertullian sees this process as a form of prophecy, implying that Adam would not have been able to use reason to give the names before eating the fruit.⁴¹ Adam could indeed have had a gift of prophecy or a foreknowledge, at least in post-lapsarian times, as he later gave names that were announcing the destiny of the persons named, as noticed in the *Clementine homilies*:

If Adam had not foreknowledge, how did he give names to the sons of men as they were born with reference to their future doings, calling the first Cain (which is interpreted ‘envy’), who through envy killed his brother Abel (which is interpreted ‘grief’), for his parents grieved over him, the first slain?⁴²

One of the problems posed by this foreknowledge hypothesis, which presupposes the existence of a “natural” name that would fit each creature’s nature, is that it renders the bringing of the animals

לְרִאוֹת מִה־יִּקְרָא לּוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא לּוֹ הָאָדָם יִבְשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ: וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם
 “שְׁמוֹת לְכָל-הַבְּהֵמָה וְלָעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלִכְל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְלָאָדָם לֹא-מָצָא עוֹד כִּנְיָו:
 (Gen 2:18–20, emphasis added).

⁴⁰ Schaff, Philip. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series Volume V Gregory of Nyssa*. New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007: 406. Print.

⁴¹ Roberts, Alexander, and Sir James Donaldson. *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: The Writings of Tertullian, Vol. 2*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1870: 328. Print.

⁴² Roberts, Alexander, and Sir James Donaldson. *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: The Clementine Homilies. The Apostolic Constitutions*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1870: 76. Print.

to Adam superfluous. To physically bring the animals to Adam would seem to imply the use of the senses, vision, touch, smell and hearing, in particular, to proceed to some kind of description or evaluation. It would also be coherent with the second stated purpose of the event: to find whether or not a helper fit for man was present among the animals. Making Adam a mere channel through which God would have named the animals by infusing a knowledge of natural names would also negate the wondrous nature of the giving of the names, in which God does not act as a simple lawgiver, but rather associates one of its creatures to the genesis of a new creation.

Eliminating the foreknowledge hypothesis does not answer the question concerning the criteria used to name the animals but it allows us to argue that Adam himself proceeded to the linguistic creation. Most of the ancient philosophy of language has dealt with this precise question of the nature of names, and linguists continue to debate the matter up to this day. The fruits of their research may thus help us shed some light on the naming process. Therefore, perhaps the best way to determine how Adam gave the names would be to list the different possibilities examined by these scholars, so as to find out which one would appear to be the most likely: In Plato's *Cratylus*,⁴³ names are considered to be either natural, that is, to be correlated with the "inner essence" or the "form" of the named element, or to be "conventional," the product of an arbitrary decision. Natural names are the one that are attributed by God or gods, who alone can pretend to know the nature of things. Conventional names, on the other hand, are the work of mere men. Plato, like many of the ancient philosophers, favored the natural hypothesis, in which names reflect some sort of natural order and etymologies the traces of their divine attribution. Modern linguistics, however, started with the rejection of the natural hypothesis and many linguists quickly adopted an extreme conventionalist view. Saussure spearheaded this movement, establishing the absolute arbitrariness of names as the pillar of his new general linguistics,⁴⁴ dismissing any correlation between name and referent as insignificant. Fortunately, in the decades

⁴³ Plato. *Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997: 101. Print.

⁴⁴ Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Cours de linguistique générale*. Lausanne: Payot, 1985. Print.

that followed, linguistics became a more mature science and the conflict between two extreme hypotheses seems to have resolved itself. A more reasonable synthesis then emerged: names can have both natural and conventional components. Something close to this idea was mentioned early by Leibniz:

Languages that took shape progressively created their own words, according to opportunities, by analogy of the sound with the emotion that accompanied the perception of reality. I would really be inclined to believe that Adam did not use any other way to name [the creatures].⁴⁵

In modern times, Roman Jakobson was one of the first to pursue this approach,⁴⁶ which was later developed around the concepts of “natural phonology” and “sound symbolism,” the idea that there are natural constraints to man’s choice of words.

The interpretation of the giving of the names has often been reduced to the opposition between two extreme hypotheses, as summarized by Umberto Eco: “Either he gave them the names that, by some extralinguistic right, were already due them, or he gave them those names we still use on the basis of a convention initiated by Adam.”⁴⁷ The aforementioned modern approach might provide a solution to this conflict between advocates of the naturalist view, such as Tertullian, and defenders of the conventionalist view, such as Philo of Alexandria.⁴⁸ Adam may have used his senses and examined the animals, creating names partly correlated with their nature, physical or behavioral. A name can indeed be a mimesis of the voice of an animal, like the name of the cuckoo (German: *Kuckuck* Spanish: *cucú* Russian: *кукушка* Swedish: *gök*). It can nonetheless also reflect the sound produced by a movement,

⁴⁵ TBA. Original Latin: “At in linguis paulatim natis orta sunt vocabula per occasiones ex analogia vocis cum affectu, qui rei sensum comitabatur: nec aliter Adamum nomina imposuisse crediderim,” from: Leibniz, G.W. *Brevis designatio meditationum de Originibus Gentium, ductis potissimum ex indicio linguarum*. N.p., 1710: 2. Print.

⁴⁶ Jakobson, Roman. “Quest for the Essence of Language.” *Diogenes* 13.51 (1965): 21–37. dio.sagepub.com. Web. 27 Oct. 2014.

⁴⁷ Eco, Umberto. *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013: 37. Print.

⁴⁸ Philo, quoted from: Niehoff, Maren R. *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria*. Cambridge University Press, 2011:163. Print.

like the Japanese class of words known as *gitaigo* (擬態語).⁴⁹ If Adam used such a method to give names to the animals, what could be said concerning the nature of these names? Such names, conventional but reflecting natural properties, would adequately reflect the nature of the naming event, which is an association between the divine and the human. Adam, with his limited human capabilities, could not make perfect names which would be exact reflections of the nature of things. He alone, however, was made in the likeness of God. He alone possesses a capacity to judge the nature of the creatures and to forge names according to this judgment. These names may not be perfect, but they are fitting, something that is already more than what any other creature could achieve.

The examination of the naming process raises another question: why was Adam asked to give names? The Venerable Bede,⁵⁰ following S^t Augustine,⁵¹ thinks that the naming was done so that “God might demonstrate to man how much better he was than all the animals lacking reason.” S^t Ephrem offers us a more poetic interpretation, with the naming taking place so that “God might make known the wisdom of Adam and the harmony that existed between the animals and Adam before he transgressed the commandment,”⁵² noticing that predators and preys, or man and beasts, could approach each other without danger. S^t Ambrose of Milan chose to see this passage as an allegory in which the animals represent the irrational passions of man, which can be tamed using the power of reason.⁵³ A common modern interpretation is the one followed by Poythress,⁵⁴ which links the naming with the dominion of Adam over the animals. The philosopher Ernst Cassirer went further and extended this link from the giving of names to their mere knowledge⁵⁵: “Knowledge of the name gives him who knows

⁴⁹ One example of *gitaigo* is the word ぶるぶる [buruburu], which is meant to imitate the sound produced by a person shivering because of the cold.

⁵⁰ Bede, and Calvin B. Kendall. *On Genesis*. Liverpool University Press, 2008: 121. Print.

⁵¹ S^t Augustine in: Louth, Andrew, ed. *Genesis 1–11 (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2016: 65. Print.

⁵² S^t Ephrem in *ibid.*: 65.

⁵³ *Ibid.*: 66.

⁵⁴ Poythress, Vern Sheridan. *In the Beginning Was the Word: Language: Language—A God-Centered Approach*. Crossway, 2009: 30. Print.

⁵⁵ It should be noted that the context of the philosopher’s quote is not re-

it mastery over the being and will of the god.”⁵⁶ This correlation between naming and power is coherent with the rest of the passage, in which God explicitly gives Adam dominion over the animals just before they are given their names. The words of the psalmist also alludes to such a correlation, while praising the greatness of God: “He determines the number of the stars, he gives to all of them their names. Great is our LORD, and abundant in power” (Psa 147:4–5⁵⁷). These very different interpretations are not mutually exclusive, and they might all reflect the divine intention, but one interpretation that has not yet received the attention it deserves is to see this episode of the giving of the names mainly as the first covenant between God and man.

It was seen that language existed prior to this event, as it was already “used” on several occasions. Here, however, man is directly associated with this creation by being given the duty of forging names, which are an essential component of language. Man was created in the likeness of God. He has the power to create through language, and to create words themselves, a gift that may seem to be given to him alone, as co-author of language.⁵⁸ Language can thus be considered to represent the first covenant between God and man, an agreement concerning the meaning of words, some created by God, others by man, but all being agreed on by the two parties, making communication possible *in* language. Did the first words declared by God mean anything when no one could hear them and no one acknowledged their meaning? These words perhaps only began to make sense after Adam first understood and recognized them as meaningful, or even only when they were written down in the book of Genesis itself. If language is seen “technically” as a system of communication based on an agreement on a code, it implies the existence of at least two users of this system, making

lated to the biblical narrative but rather concerns the act of naming in general.

⁵⁶ Quoted from: Sebeok, Thomas A. *I Think I Am a Verb: More Contributions to the Doctrine of Signs*. New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 1986: 92. Print.

⁵⁷ מוֹנֵה מִסְפָּר לְכֹכְבִּים לְכֹל שְׁמוֹת יִקְרָא: גָּדוֹל אֲדוֹנֵינוּ וְרַב-כֹּחַ לְתַבְּוִנָּתוֹ: מוֹנֵה מִסְפָּר: (Psa 147:4–5).

⁵⁸ One may argue that the Serpent shared the gift of language with Adam, together with the angels and the other heavenly creatures, but nothing indicates that these creatures would have played any role in the creation of language itself. Adam could thus be considered the only earthly creature endowed with language.

Adam a necessary element in the creation of language. Even if the first use of language at the very beginning of the book was indeed a dialogue between two persons of the trinity, their unity could lead us to deny it to be a true communicative event. Thus, if this hypothesis was true, the giving of the names by Adam would not only make him a partner associated to the creation of language, by the benevolence of God: he would also be a necessary element making language possible. Without this covenant between God and another party, language itself may not have been possible, demonstrating the very peculiar status of language within the creation.

A deeper analysis of this event will follow in the second part of this chapter (§ 2.2), but let us now continue our analysis of the text of Genesis by examining a question that has troubled scholars since the antiquity: What language did Adam speak and use to name the animal?

Speculations concerning the primordial language can be found in both scholarly and artistic realms. The aura and the prestige of the Adamic language have inflamed the imagination of many, not only attracting prestigious authors but also a throng of less reputable persons as well, and in particular persons driven by a naïve nationalism to prove that their mother tongue was “the” original language. Among these, John Goropius could be mentioned: a 16th-century physician who used the always popular method of folk-etymologies to trace the Flemish language back to the garden of Eden.⁵⁹ Countless of similar claims have been made across the globe, even though the attention of such individuals nowadays has shifted away from the garden of Eden toward Mesopotamia, linking almost every language to Sumerian in an attempt to claim the invention of writing as a personal heritage.

Turning to more reputable authors, Dante considered Hebrew to be the *lingua adamica* in his scholarly works,⁶⁰ but presented another view in his *Divine comedy*, in which Adam states that

⁵⁹ Tooke, William, William Beloe, and Robert Nares. *A New and General Biographical Dictionary: Containing an Historical and Critical Account of the Lives and Writings of the Most Eminent Persons in Every Nation; Particularly the British and Irish ...* G. G. and J. Robinson, 1798: 79. Print.

⁶⁰ Alighieri, Dante. “De vulgari eloquentia.” Trans. by Steven Botterill. *Dante Alighieri - Opera Omnia*. Web. 2 Nov. 2015. (“The Hebrew language was that which the lips of the first speaker moulded.”).

the language he spoke is extinct (as nothing used by human lasts long!) and that even though God was called “El” in the earthly Hebrew, His “proper” name was “Eli” in the language of Eden.⁶¹ Umberto Eco mentions a tradition according to which Adam spoke “a sort of language of interior illumination, as in other episodes of the Bible, expressed himself by thunderclaps and lightning,”⁶² but he, in his essay *Opera aperta*, sees the primordial language as a form of binary code, binary being the simplest form of language.⁶³ Indeed, the Italian semiotician knows that language is based on the opposition between meaningful elements, and thus that the primordial language could also be the most rudimentary one, one based on the minimum number of distinguishable elements: two. Eco also shows how combinations of 0 and 1 could then evolve into complex forms of communications, thereby proposing a model for the genesis and evolution of human languages.

The Venerable Bede, on the other hand, favors what may be the most obvious answer: Adam spoke Hebrew, as all the names preceding the confusion of tongues are in that language.⁶⁴ The argument is rather weak, as the reported speech in the book of Genesis could simply be composed of Hebrew translations of a hypothetic *lingua adamica*, as the book does not claim to be a verbatim account of the creation period. Translated speech can be found throughout the Scriptures without mentions of the original tongue, or even mentions of the fact that they are translations, an example of which are the words of the Pharaoh in Egypt, showing that even though Hebrew might be the *lingua adamica* and the language in which the “let there be light” was pronounced, the basis of the argument brought forth by the Venerable Bede remains rather shaky. A more plausible argument in favor of the Hebrew tongue is to point out the use of the etymology or polysemy of names by God and Adam, concerning the naming of Eve for example: “she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of

⁶¹ Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy - Volume 3*. Ticknor and Fields, 1867: 174. Print. (Paradiso: Canto XXVI)

⁶² Eco, Umberto. *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013: 23. Print.

⁶³ Eco, Umberto. *Opera aperta. Forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee*. Milan: Bompiani, 2013: 313. Print.

⁶⁴ Bede, and Calvin B. Kendall. *On Genesis*. Liverpool University Press, 2008: 121. Print.

Man.” (Gen 2:23⁶⁵). This passage is rather obscure in the English translation, as there is no connection whatsoever between the English word “woman” and the fact of being “taken out of Man.” In the original Hebrew text, however, the word for “woman” is presented as a grammatically feminine form of a word meaning “Man” or “Person,” **אִישׁ** [ʾiš],⁶⁶ which becomes **אִשָּׁה** [ʾišāh]⁶⁷, explaining the meaning of the aforementioned verse. This kind of direct link between the meaning of a passage and the language in which it is expressed appears to be the best indication that the Adamic language would have to be Hebrew, as these links would not have been preserved in translation.

Then, following the “parade” of the animals, the narrative continues: a helper fit for Adam is not found among them, prompting God to form the first woman out of one of Adam’s ribs. She is brought to Adam to be named “Woman” (**אִשָּׁה** [ʾišāh]) and both live naked and without shame in the garden. Following this, the first dialogue of the narrative takes place, between the woman and the serpent, who asks the following question: “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden’?” (Gen 3:1⁶⁸).

The dialogue then continues with the temptation by the serpent, who offers his interpretation of God’s command concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil:

And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. (Gen 3:2-5⁶⁹)

⁶⁵ “יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לִקְחָהּ זָוָת:” (Gen 2:23).

⁶⁶ The words **אִישׁ** [ʾiš] and **אָדָם** [ʾādām] are unrelated. The former is more general in its designation of human beings, being less gendered than [ʾādām]. The word **אָדָם** [ʾādām], however, can be related to the word noun **אֲדָמָה** [ʾādāmāh], designating the earth, the soil.

⁶⁷ The link between the two words may nonetheless be the product of a mere folk-etymology.

⁶⁸ “וַתִּשְׁאָל הָאִשָּׁה מִן הַנָּחָשׁ וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיךָ הֲאֵלֶּהֶם וְהָאֵלֶּהֶם לֹא הָאֵלֶּהֶם מִכָּל עֵץ הַגָּן:” (Gen 3:1).

⁶⁹ “וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל-הַנָּחָשׁ מִפְּרִי עֵץ-הַגָּן נֹאכָל: וּמִפְּרִי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ-הַגָּן:”

As is often the case in the book of Genesis, this account is particularly succinct, raising more questions than it answers. One of the first questions that one may ask concerning this passage is: why did the serpent tempt the woman rather than Adam? The text is silent concerning the circumstances leading up to this encounter, but a careful analysis of these verses can give us some clues helping us to answer this question, which will have important consequences in the narrative as a whole.

From what is said by the woman, it would seem that she did not hear the commandment directly from God but that she came to know it from Adam.⁷⁰ Several differences can be noticed between the original commandment and the one stated by the woman. The first is that the name of the tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, is replaced by a location: “the tree which is in the midst of the garden.” The second difference is the adjunction of the prohibition to touch the tree, which is not mentioned earlier by God. The source of these differences could either be Adam or the woman herself. The commandment is first uttered by God; received by Adam; retold by Adam; heard by the woman, and finally retold by her to the serpent. The distortion, oversimplification, or simply the misunderstanding of the commandment could have happened at each stage of this communication chain. It can nevertheless be noticed that distortions in communication only increase each time another stage is added, making the woman the most at risk of receiving a distorted version of the commandment. This may precisely be the reason explaining why the serpent tempted Eve rather than Adam: she was the most remote link in the chain, and therefore could more easily be led to doubt the commandment and then led to transgress it.

The serpent’s stratagem is based on a twofold doubt. The first doubt concerns the content of the commandment: “You will not die,” which could either mean that God did not really say that they will die or that it is simply not true. The second doubt concerns the intent of the author of the commandment: “For God

אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא תִנְעוּ בוֹ פֶּן־תָּמּוּתוּן: וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּחַשׁ אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה לֹא־מוֹת תָּמּוּתוּן: כִּי יָדַע אֱלֹהִים כִּי בְיוֹם אֲכַלְכֶּם מִמֶּנּוּ וְנִפְקַחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם וְהִייתֶם כֹּכָבִים וְחַדָּשִׁים כָּמוֹת אֱלֹהִים (Gen 3:2–5).

⁷⁰ It should be noted that Adam received this command before the onomastic covenant, that is, before he was given access to language.

knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Here, the serpent drives a wedge between creator and creature and attributes an evil intent to the former as he flatters the *ego* of the latter. He also closes his argument by a reference to the name of the tree, the name forgotten by the woman: the *tree of knowledge of good and evil*. What does it mean: “you will be like God, knowing good and evil”? In order to better understand the nature of the temptation leading to the fall, an event that will profoundly impact both man’s language and his being, we must briefly pause our reading to reflect on the nature of this tree.

The nature and purpose of the tree of knowledge of good and evil have been interpreted differently by commentators: S^t Ephrem interprets it as a barrier separating the space where man was allowed in Eden from the inner garden, forbidden to him.⁷¹ S^t Cyril of Jerusalem sees in it a prefiguration of the cross: “the tree brought ruin to Adam; the tree shall bring you into paradise,”⁷² while S^t John of Damascus recognizes its physical reality but nonetheless insists on its spiritual nature: “the tree of knowledge of good and evil is the power of discernment by multidimensional vision. This is the complete knowing of one’s own nature.”⁷³ Unfortunately, the fathers of the Church did not leave us detailed interpretations of the nature of the tree or the prohibition. In the following pages, an unraveling of the meaning of these difficult verses will nonetheless be attempted, starting with the name of the tree.

The link between the tree and its name is not as obvious as it may seem, as at least three different conceptions of this link are possible: The first is that the “knowledge” associated with the tree is somehow physically present in its fruits and that this knowledge is transmitted to anyone who eats them. In this case, eating the forbidden fruit is akin to a theft of knowledge from God, something reminiscent of the legend of Prometheus’ theft of fire.

The second is that the fruit acts as a trigger, a key giving

⁷¹ Louth, Andrew, ed. *Genesis 1–11 (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2016: 61. Print. (St Ephrem, *Hymns on paradise* 3.3).

⁷² Ibid.: 62. (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical lectures* 13.31).

⁷³ Ibid.: 62. (John of Damascus, *Orthodox faith* 2.11).

the person eating it access to a knowledge already present in some locked part of his mind, or given by the Spirit. It could be compared to a psychoactive substance that triggers visions in someone absorbing it, even though it is a mere chemical that does not contain the visions themselves. This conception would seem to imply the reality of Plato's doctrine of "recollection" (ἀνάμνησις),⁷⁴ stating that learning is impossible and that all knowledge must therefore already be in our mind, waiting to be accessed through "recollection." The third and last case would be that the knowledge of good and evil is not directly related to the physical tree. The tree could be the symbol of the commandment: it is named the tree of knowledge of good and evil because God forbade its fruits to mankind. Knowledge is thus not acquired by the action of eating the fruit itself but rather through the experience of the transgression of the commandment, and its consequences. This interpretation is followed by S^t Augustine:

The reason for the prohibition was to show that the rational soul is not in its own power but ought to be subject to God, and must guard the order of its salvation by obedience, or by disobedience be corrupted. Hence God called the tree which he had forbidden to be touched the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, because anyone who had touched it contrary to the prohibition would discover the penalty of sin, and so would be able to distinguish between the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience.⁷⁵

This third interpretation is certainly more intellectually appealing than the others. If it is correct, the tree would not offer quantified knowledge in the form of a fruit but would rather represent a test

⁷⁴ Plato. *Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997: 881. Print. (*Meno* 82).

⁷⁵ Augustine. *Augustine: Earlier Writings*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1953: 338. Print; Original Latin: "Ad hoc enim et prohibuerat ut ostenderet animae rationalis naturam, non in sua potestate sed Deo subditam esse debere, et ordinem suae salutis per obedientiam custodire, per inobedientiam corrumpere. Hinc et arborem quam tangi vetuit sic appellavit dignoscentiae boni et mali; quia cum eam contra vetitum tetigisset, experiretur poenam peccati et eo modo dignosceret quid interesset inter obedientiae bonum et inobedientiae malum." From: Augustine. *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera*. N.p.:Parent-Desbarres, 1839: 267. Print. (*De Natura Boni Contra Manichaeos* § 35).

of the human will, meant to determine its inclination.

If the prohibition of the fruit indeed represents a test whose failure would result in mankind acquiring a knowledge of good and evil, a paradox then seems to appear. Kierkegaard formulated this paradox as follows: “How could he [Adam] understand the difference between good and evil when this distinction would follow as a consequence of the enjoyment of the fruit”?⁷⁶ For the Danish philosopher, this paradox implies that Adam could not have understood the prohibition but that it nonetheless awoke his free-will by opening up possibilities: prior to the Law, there was no good nor evil and therefore no moral choice through which man could exercise his free-will, something that changes with God’s first command. From a theological standpoint, the view of Kierkegaard is problematic: it would seem to imply that God is somewhat deceiving Adam, by giving him a command that he cannot understand. This could exonerate Adam of any fault if he broke the command, in the same way that a mentally handicapped person unable to understand the concept of crime is usually not considered responsible in a court of law. If Kierkegaard’s view is mistaken, another way to solve the paradox must be found. In order to find this way, the words of the command must be reexamined: “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.” (Gen 2:16–17). Kierkegaard’s paradox implies that a capacity to distinguish good and evil is necessary to understand this command, but understanding is not a binary variable, either all or nothing. To understand the command means to understand the prohibition, what to do and what not to do, something unrelated to an ability to pass a moral judgment, which is the essence of the “knowledge of good and evil.” This capacity to judge does not only require an understanding of the matter submitted to judgment but also an understanding of the causes involved: why is it good, or why is it evil. The paradox is thus fallacious, as Adam could have had an understanding of the prohibition without having a capacity to pass moral judgment. He could understand that he should not eat the forbidden fruits but not yet understand why it would be evil to do so.

⁷⁶ Kierkegaard, Søren. *The Essential Kierkegaard*. Princeton University Press, 2013: 141. Print.

The previous remarks concerning the nature of the tree are not vain philological or exegetical musings. They are meant to shed light on the true nature of the transgression of the first humans, a transgression that will completely reshape their destiny and that originates in their first dialogues, their first “uses” of language, uses that always constitute a choice between good and evil. For now, however, let us examine the reaction of the woman and her spouse:

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. (Gen 3:6–7⁷⁷)

As it would later be the case with King David’s lust for Bathsheba,⁷⁸ the eyes are where temptation starts. The fruit was not only appealing to the senses but also to the mind. The woman thought that eating it would infuse her with wisdom, and perhaps in a sense it did, in fact, make the couple wiser, just not in the way they expected.

It has indeed been argued before that the fruit did not contain any “physically incarnated knowledge,” and that it did not trigger a form of vision. Instead, it is the transgression itself that would give knowledge of good and evil. How were the couple’s eyes opened then? It will be contended here that the woman expected the fruit to magically give her wisdom and that it is precisely the absence of any physical effect that made her realize the difference between good and evil, realize that she transgressed God’s only command and gained nothing from her transgression. This experience is in itself what gave the couple a form of wisdom. Their eyes were finally opened but all that they could see was their own shame. They then knew the difference between good and evil: they were good, but they have now done evil. S^t Augustine thus

⁷⁷ וַתֵּרָא הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל וְכִי תִאֲנֶה־הִוא לְעֵינַיִם וְנִחְמָד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל “וַתִּקַּח מִפְּרִי וַתֹּאכַל וַתֵּתֶן גַּם־לְאִישָׁהּ עִמָּהּ וַיֹּאכַל: וַתִּפְקְחֶנָּה עֵינֶי שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי עֲרֻמָּם הֵם וַיִּתְּפְרוּ עֲלֵהּ תָאֲנָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם חֲגֹרֹת:” (Gen 3:6–7).

⁷⁸ 2 Sam 11.

summarized this experience:

It was not in order to see outward things that “their eyes were opened,” because they could see such things already. It was in order that they might see the difference between the good they had lost and the evil into which they had fallen. That is why the tree is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They had been forbidden to touch it because if they did it would bring on the experience of this distinction. It takes the experience of the pains of sickness to open our eyes to the pleasantness of health.⁷⁹

If the source of their shame truly is the realization of the evil of their deed, why is it written: “the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked”? Why would they immediately take fig leaves and cover themselves with them? It would be tempting to attribute this to the appearance of concupiscence of the flesh, which supposedly would have begun with the transgression. If this were to be true, however, it would imply that the fruit did “magically” transform them, from desireless creatures to lustful ones. It is easy to demonstrate that desire was already present before they ate the fruit, since the woman desired the fruit for its sight, as a food and for the wisdom she thought she would gain from it. A more plausible explanation would be that the couple already had desired each other but that they only became conscious of the potential dangers of lust after the shame induced by the vain transgression of the command. Their transgression was caused by their unrestrained desire for beauty, food, and knowledge. They thus became aware of the potential dangers of all desires and they attempted to gain control over them. The most obvious of these desires is lust, which comes from the eyes, a sin that throughout the Bible brought people into the darkness, even among its greatest figures such as King David or King Salomon. They, therefore,

⁷⁹ Augustine. *The City of God, Books VIII–XVI (The Fathers of the Church, Volume 14)*. Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2010: 390. Print; Original Latin: “Aperti sunt, inquit, oculi amborum, non ad uidendum, nam et antea uidebant, sed ad discernendum inter bonum quod amiserant et malum quod ceciderant. Vnde et ipsum lignum, eo quod istam faceret dinoscentiam, si ad uescendum contra uetitum tangeretur, ex ea re nomen accepit, ut appellaretur lignum sciendi boni et mali. Experta enim morbi molestia euidentior fit etiam iucunditas sanitatis.” From: Augustine. *Sancti Aurelli Augustini: de civitate Dei*. Typographi Brepols, 1955: 440. Print.

covered themselves with fig leaves, something also interpreted by S^t Irenaeus as a sign of penance⁸⁰ as the sap in the fig tree leaves contains ficin, an irritating substance that can cause burns, rashes, and allergic reactions.

Finally, Adam and the woman now named Eve are thrown out of the garden and are condemned to a life on Earth as mortals. They paid the price of their transgression with death but nevertheless received knowledge of good and evil through this experience. They knew what good was; they have done evil. They must find again the good, as they now realize the difference between the two, but as S^t Augustine said: “It takes the experience of the pains of sickness to open our eyes to the pleasantness of health.”⁸¹ God certainly foreknew that man would fail to abide by his command, but he also knew that only by doing evil could man realize what good is. By this transgression, and by a spiritual distance from God, man perhaps has been given a chance to better notice the importance of God’s presence. This event may appear to be unrelated to language, but it is not the case: it firstly is the direct consequence of man’s first dialogue in the narrative and of his failure to correctly interpret the words of the Deity. Secondly, the transgression and the resulting fall profoundly change man’s being and his destiny, explaining the inclusion of the episode of the tree of knowledge in this review of the biblical account of the creation of language.

This examination of the book of Genesis, from the creation to the fall of man, was meant to provide a general overview of the narrative concerning the creation and first uses of language, mostly from the point of view of the exegetical tradition of the Church. It has been prolonged until the fall of man, as the first transgression finds its source in the first law, the first dialogue, and the appearance of thinking and interpretation. These elements are all manifestations of language. They form the source from which the meta-narrative can be revealed and they are part of the

⁸⁰ Louth, Andrew, ed. *Genesis 1–11 (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2016: 82. Print.

⁸¹ Augustine. *The City of God, Books VIII–XVI (The Fathers of the Church, Volume 14)*. Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2010: 390. Print; Original Latin: “Experta enim morbi molestia euidentior fit etiam iucunditas sanitatis.” From: Augustine. *Sancti Aurelli Augustini: de civitate Dei*. Typographi Brepols, 1955: 440. Print. (Book XIV, Ch. 17)

(hi)story of language, which guides man's walk on the path toward the manifestation of his essential being.

2.2 The meta-narrative of language in the creation episode

Πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει
All men by nature desire to *see/know*

— Aristotle, *Metaphysics*⁸²

The overview of the narrative of the creation episode presented in the previous section gives us the earthly context of the appearance of language in the biblical universe. The origin of man and his first uses of language were also examined, as it is through these uses that language shows its significance. The (hi)story of language and being is nonetheless more than the story of the earthly events described in the narrative. It is the (hi)story of man's world, of the way his mind attempts to grasp the universe and represents it in language. In order for this (hi)story to be told, the narrative must become the source of a reconstruction of this world. The essence of language itself must be grasped and put into words, which may at first be technical ones, that is, words that are remote from the direct experience of the earth, life, and the skies. This technical meta-discourse must nonetheless then be brought back from the “highly meta-physical,” toward the physical, through *meta-phor*. As man's destiny is for him to experience his essential being and to become a conscious manifestation of the divine, he must do more than simply think about it, and this is why the meta-discourse must ultimately give place to a meta-narrative, which contrary to the meta-discourse can be related to direct earthly experiences, and be linked with a sensory experience.

The narrative was first overviewed, passing over the meta-physical and the (hi)story of language and being, so as to focus on the text and the earthly events it depicts because, in the words of

⁸² TBA. Original Greek from: Henderson, Jeffrey. “ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics*.” *Loeb Classical Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 4 Dec. 2016. (Emphasis added).

Heidegger, “we can more purely retrieve what was passed over if we come back to it from where it belongs.”⁸³ The ground must be packed down before a foundation can be built. It is only when the creation narrative has been surveyed, as a whole, that the meta-narrative can be told. The present section will open this (hi)story of language and being, telling of the origin of man’s house of being and of the relationship that its dwellers have with it. It will show how man’s transition from being a creature living exclusively on the naked earth to one dwelling in a house of being changes him, and how it represents an *ek-stasis* offering him a chance to not merely live on the earth but also see its nature. Man will have the opportunity to tread the path toward his essential being, choosing either to embrace or to refuse it. It will lead to an unveiling of the way by which language profoundly changes man’s nature, endowing him with both power and responsibility, and allowing him to fulfill his destiny. The fall will also be part of this (hi)story, as this event is intricately intertwined with the *ek-stasis* taking man from the naked earth to the world. This first *ek-stasis* paves the way for the fall, but it is also through this *ek-stasis* that man will be able to unconceal his own facticity, his own nature, and thereby have the chance to become a conscious instrument of divine being. Only a lost paradise can be reclaimed, and only a fallen man can know the joy of redemption. The meta-narrative tells the same story as the narrative, but it tells it from a different point of view: the (hi)story of man’s chance for redemption as viewed from the world rather than from the earth, a world brought back as close as possible to the realm of man’s experiences. The (hi)story will now go back to what was “passed over,” to the higher dimension of the creation episode, both the technical meta-discourse and the metaphorical meta-narrative, beginning with the origin of the world.

2.2.1 Language before Adam

In the beginning, there was no language, no earth, and no sky. The creation narrative recounts the origin of the latter two. The creation of language, however, is never mentioned. The (hi)story

⁸³ Heidegger, Martin. *Country Path Conversations*. Indiana University Press, 2010: 81. Print; Original German: “Vermutlich deshalb, weil wir das Übergangene reiner nachholon können, wenn wir auf es von dorthier zu rückkommen, wohin es gehört.” From: GA 77: 125.

of language thus begins with its first appearance, but prior to examining this event, the earliest period of the creation must be reexamined, as it is there that the ground of language finds its origin.

The creation begins with the skies, the heavens: not the blue dome enveloping the earth, which has yet to appear, nor simply the abode of the celestial bodies. The skies are “the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year’s seasons and their changes, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and inclemency of the weather, the drifting clouds and blue depth of the ether.”⁸⁴ Beyond this poetic language lies the essence of the sky: it is not only an open space where the stars can shine but also a clearing of time, giving the universe its ground, a space where beings can be sheltered and a time for them to grow in. The skies form a ground for possibilities, a place where beings can *be*, not as static entities but rather as part of a continuous becoming. They open up the possibility for motion to occur, something that requires both space and time, and motion will form one of the essential characteristics of the universe, as told by Aristotle, who placed it at the heart of his *Physics*,⁸⁵ which is not the modern study of the material laws of the universe but rather the study of its becoming. At this point, however, there is no movement, as the prime mover has yet to create what is to be moved.

After the skies, follows the earth. Not merely one of the billion celestial bodies, nor simply the crust toward which we are pulled, but rather the “bearer, blossoming and fruiting, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant and animal.”⁸⁶ The earth is always under the skies, grounded in them, and it is also the

⁸⁴ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001: 147. Print; Original German: “Der Himmel ist der wölbende Sonnengang, der gestaltwechselnde Mondlauf, der wandernde Glanz der Gestirne, die Zeiten des Jahres und ihre Wende, Licht und Dämmer des Tages, Dunkel und Helle der Nacht, das Wirtliche und Unwirtliche der Wetter, Wolkenzug und blauende Tiefe des Äthers.” From: GA 7: 151.

⁸⁵ Aristotle. *Physics*. Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

⁸⁶ Heidegger, Martin, and David Farrell Krell. *Basic Writings*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993: 351. Print. (Building Dwelling Thinking); Original German: “Die Erde ist die dienend Tragende, die blühend Fruchtende, hingebreitet in Gestein und Gewässer, aufgehend zu Gewächs und Getier.” From: GA 7: 151.

secondary ground, the place from which beings can sprout. It bears beings on its surface but all beings also originate from it: they are formed from the earth, which is the matter filling the skies. It is also the shelter of beings, that is, their dwelling, as no one yet has the means to create his own abode. For now, all creatures equally dwell in the raw product of the Φύσις, and all beings receive what “nature” offers them. At this point, the earth is **תְּהוֹ וָבְהוּ** [tōhū wāḇōhū],⁸⁷ without form and apparent order. It is only a ground for beings, a ground which is itself grounded in the skies, and inseparable from it. The earth is what makes the skies become what they are, as the possibilities they open up can only be realized through the earth, the matter that fills the space and evolves following the course of time, that is, the earth that fills the skies.

The first verse of the narrative thus speaks of the simultaneous creation of a pair of elements, which are complementary; which are distinguishable but nonetheless impossible to conceptualize without the existence of the other: if the heavens were created alone, what could be said about it? If the universe is completely uniform, no matter of what it is constituted, it is the same as if it was empty since it could not be distinguished from any other “thing.” Could this uniform universe be described and its nature named? The essence of naming is reference, and reference is meaningless if there is only one possible referent. The simultaneous creation of “the heavens and the earth” thus did not occur by measure of economy but rather by necessity. As it will be shown at a later point, this first verse constitutes a prefiguration of the importance of contrast, separation, division, not only as the essence of the creation process described in the book of Genesis but as the essence of the creation as a whole.

Immediately after the creation of the skies and the earth, follows the first mention of language, as the Deity utters the words “let there be light” (**יְהי אור**). Language thus precedes man, and it comes into view as the Deity itself uses it, apparently, independently from the creation.

Historically, language has foremost been seen technically, as a way to communicate intentions or “meaning.” Thus seen, it should include at least two persons: one emitter and one recipient. When

⁸⁷ Gen 1:2.

the first sentence is uttered, however, no ears are there to hear it, as neither man nor other creatures exist at this point.⁸⁸ As mentioned in the previous section, some interpret this sentence as a kind of word-magic, linking the sentence to the creation process. Others have argued that it is addressed to the second person of the trinity, the *logos*, who may be involved in the creation, as “through him all things were made.”⁸⁹ Another more worldly interpretation would be to consider these first words as a *clearing*, forming a tertiary ground, following the skies and the earth. The skies come first, and the earth is located within the space they open up. The first words mark the clearing of a third level, resting on the earth, under the skies: the becoming of the *world*. The world not seen as the horizon of the creatures, nor the surface of contact between the soil and the air upon which man lives, but rather as the meta-physical space where living beings can find a shelter for their spirit. This space is opened by what we commonly name “language,” which has also been called “the house of being” (*das Haus des Seins*)⁹⁰ by Martin Heidegger. This space is the result of the clearing. But it is not first created empty and then filled with words. The words themselves induce the clearing, as a source of light that reveals a portion of space around it, allowing it to be used. Signs provide the seeds for language to grow as a plant, in the future, when a gardener will be appointed to tend it.

Thus, as the skies form the ground of the earth, that is, physical matter, the earth is itself a ground of language, the meta-physical. Language will then provide a ground for the being of man. Furthermore, the exact words planting the seed of language give us a clue of its purpose. The words are indeed not random: “let there be light.” These can be seen as a two-dimensional exhortation. Light is what clears. It is what makes things apparent. It reveals a space and what fills it. The light in this exhortation can be seen as the light that uncovers the skies and the earth, making them visible, disclosing their nature. The same sentence

⁸⁸ Even though the narrative does not mention the existence of any creature at this point, it does not deny it either. The presence of Satan, angels, or other types of non-earthly creatures is still possible within the universe of the narrative.

⁸⁹ Joh 1:3.

⁹⁰ Heidegger, Martin, and David Farrell Krell. *Basic Writings*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993: 217. Print. (Letter on humanism); Original German: GA 9: 313.

also enlightens something else: the world. Language is the light of the world. It is what brings into view, what unconceals and gives man sight of the universe but in order for light to be truly what it is, darkness is also necessary, and again, it does not seem to be a coincidence that immediately after the first sentence, follows a mention of the separation between light and darkness, and the first naming: the day and the night. Once again, two parallel events can be seen, one in which light and darkness are separated under the skies and one in which two concepts derived from this event are separated, forming the first pair of opposite words, thereby shedding light on their difference. The light is the beacon leading beings out of the darkness, and words break the silence, they are the bearers of an unveiling. Silence, as the darkness of the world,⁹¹ is what allows the words to be, as the darkness paves the way for the light to appear.

The first words thus initiate the appearance of the meta-physical, and this appearance also marks the beginning of the meta-narrative proper, as the (hi)story of the world, of this space opened by language. Only following this does the narrative mention the creation of the sky and the earth, in their usual sense,⁹² the sky as the atmosphere painting the day in shades of blue and the earth as a globe of lava with a hardened crust upon which living beings will swarm. Even though they are more often than not designated in English as “creatures,” these “living beings” (a term closer to the original Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה [nəpēš ḥayyāh]⁹³) are not a direct creation of the Deity, as were the earth and the skies of the beginning. They are rather “brought forth” from the sea, and then from the earth. This difference is not as trivial as it may appear, and it is mentioned here because it does play a part in the present (hi)story, as it conveys a fundamental aspect of the biblical universe. This universe is not conceived as a mechanical process of assembly of independent pieces called “beings” but rather as the continuous growth of a single entity, the becoming of beings from within beings, in the manner of a plant growing from seed to tree, reproducing itself, filling space and evolving in time. This is the

⁹¹ The word “darkness,” it should be noted, does not have any pejorative connotation here. Silence is the contrasting element to the light. It is its necessary counterpart and not only a “lack.”

⁹² Gen 1:6–9.

⁹³ Gen 1:24.

Φύσις of the universe.

The word Φύσις, already used by Homer,⁹⁴ finds its origin in the Greek root verb φύω [phúō] designating the growth of living organisms.⁹⁵ For Aristotle, Φύσις describes the being of beings which “have in themselves the source of their making,”⁹⁶ “a source of their movements and changes,”⁹⁷ as opposed to artificial things, which are the product of the Τέχνη, both art and technique. Φύσις does not only describe the growing of beings, but rather their continuous becoming, from within other beings: “that which is growing, as such, is proceeding from something to something. What, then, is it which is growing? Not the thing it is growing out of, but the thing it is growing into. So the form is nature [Φύσις].”⁹⁸ The philosopher makes a strict distinction between living beings and the rest of the universe, but in the case of the universe described by the narrative, the Φύσις can be seen as encompassing the whole creation: the skies, the earth, the seas, the air, the soil, and the living beings that do not appear as ex-nihilo creations but are rather brought forth, sprouting out of the soil and the seas. The living beings do not “grow,” they appropriate the elements in order to make them part of themselves. A plant does not grow *from itself*: it rather holds sway over the earth, so as to push it toward the skies, while also appropriating the air that will form

⁹⁴ Homerus. *Homeri Ilias*. E librariis Orphanotrophei, 1820: 152. Print. “ὥς ἄρα φωνήσας πόρε φάρμακον ἀργεῖφόντης ἐκ γαίης ἐρύσας, καί μοι φύσιν αὐτοῦ ἔδειξε.” (Emphasis added).

⁹⁵ The root verb φύω [phúō] nonetheless possesses a wide range of use, and the aforementioned definition as the “growth of a living organism” is only one of them. It can also mean “to bring forth,” “to produce,” “to beget,” “to be by nature” etc. It can be noted that this word comes from the Proto-Indo-European root *b^heu, which is also the root from which the verb “to be” originates in different Indo-European languages: the Russian *быть*, the Lithuanian *būti*, the Persian *بودان* [budan]. (See Pokorny, Julius. *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Bern: Francke, 1959: 146–147. *Internet Archive*. Web. 24 Jan. 2017).

⁹⁶ Aristotle. *Physics: Books I and II*. Gloucestershire: Clarendon Press, 1983: 23. Print; Original Greek: “αὐτῶν ἔχει τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ τῆς ποιήσεως” (Emphasis added). From: Aristotle. “Ἀριστοτέλους Φυσικῆς ἀκροάσεως β’.[Aristotle’s *Physics*, book II].” *MIT*. Web. 22 Jan. 2016.

⁹⁷ Ibid.: 25. Original Greek: “ἡ πρώτη ἐκάστω ὑποκειμένη ὕλη τῶν ἐχόντων ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀρχὴν κινήσεως καὶ μεταβολῆς.” From: Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.: 25. Original word in brackets added. Original Greek: “τὸ φυόμενον ἐκ τινὸς εἰς τὶ ἔρχεται ἢ φύεται. Τί οὖν φύεται; οὐχὶ ἐξ οὗ, ἀλλ’ εἰς ὃ. Ἦ ἄρα μορφή φύσις.” From: Ibid.

part of its substance. It also does not generate anything *by itself*, as all movement can be traced back to a cause, the cause of which would inevitably lead to the *prima causa*.

The Φύσις therefore designates the being and becoming of the universe, in its entirety, as it all comes down to a continuous transformation and becoming of the creation, from primordial particles aggregating themselves to form atoms, molecules, crystals, materials, up to biological cells transforming elements into other cells and organisms, plants and animals. This being and becoming of the universe also includes the world and language, which also sprout from a seed originating from the Deity, extending the reach of the universe beyond the material, toward the meta-physical. Therefore, the Φύσις of the biblical universe, whose beginning is described in the beginning of the narrative, encompasses all the creation and it forms the frame in which the (hi)story of language and being will be unfolded in the narrative. The meta-narrative is grounded in the narrative, just as the meta-physical, the worldly must be grounded in the Φύσις. This view of “nature,” as “Φύσις” is usually translated, is larger than Aristotle’s: it sees the universe as a continuously evolving organism, *by its nature*, and like a tree planted with a specific purpose, it is tended by a gardener who can orient its growth, cut sick branches, and graft new ones.

At this point of the narrative, the ancestors of most of the living beings that will inhabit the earth, the seas, and the sky are brought forth. The Deity then utters its first oral blessings, to the creatures of the seas and the sky first, exhorting them to be fruitful and to multiply. The same blessing is bestowed upon the cattle and the other beasts of the earth, immediately preceding the creation of the first man. There is therefore no one able to understand the first utterances, no one to witness the generation of language, the embryo of the world. In the meta-narrative, a world is already opened, but it is empty of creatures: no one is dwelling in this new space. Fish, birds, and cattle can hardly be considered to have understood the sentences as direct commands. Their fruitfulness and inclination to reproduce are inherent to the Φύσις, needing no supplementary intervention in order for them to do so. Thus, besides representing the seeds of the subsequent development of language, do these utterances serve any other purpose? Were they not meant to be understood by someone? A positive answer would seem difficult and it would contradict the

role of the Bible in the biblical universe. Indeed, as the Deity is not confined to the skies, that is, is outside of time, the absence of any creature able to understand these sentences at the moment of their utterance therefore do not preclude the possibility that they would be understood at a later point. Thus, as the readers of the narrative dis-cover the circumstances of the beginning of time, they may be the ones to whom these exhortations are addressed, thereby also showing men that the animals were blessed and spoken to by God before him. The narrative would thus seem to be intended to both recount the creation of the universe and to address the reader so as to make him realize that he is fully part of it, and that the narrative itself is part of the Φύσις. The reader would seem to be seen by the narrative as someone now dwelling in this space, this world that was cleared with the utterance of the first words. The fact that these words are only heard when man receives the narrative itself is of no importance, as the Φύσις is a whole that must be seen as such, outside of the *presence* of time.

2.2.2 Adam before language

The beginning of the creation marked the appearance of the skies, the space and time that initiate the clearing opening the universe. It was followed by the appearance of the earth, the physical matter that gives the universe its substance, and fills it. Language brought about another clearing: the birth of the meta-physical world. When man is created, however, he has yet to know this world, and he only experiences the earth and the skies. The contrast between the earth and the skies on the one hand, and the world on the other, is already present, but it is only visible to the Deity that created them and to us, the readers of the narrative.

At this point, concerning man, the narrative is conflated with the meta-narrative, as he cannot see this world nor dwell in it. The meta-narrative, however, must take root in the earth, in the narrative describing man before he discovered the meta-physical, seeing the conditions that preceded the beginning of the (hi)story of man and language so that his life as a dweller of the world can then be contrasted with his life on the naked earth. This contrast will be a key allowing us to perceive the nature of the *ek-stasis* caused by the throwing of man into the world.

To perceive the nature of language implies a clear awareness of the nature of man, as the two are interdependent, language giving man his unique place in the Φύσις and man giving language its significance. On the sixth day of the creation, the first man is formed from the soil covering the earth. Like a potter, the Deity shapes him from red clay before firing its work of art in the ardent breath of life. From this soil and this red hue, the living vessel gets his name, which knits the concepts of soil, the color red, the first man, and mankind, all together into one word: Adam (אַדָּם). From the earth and under the sky, man receives life from the Deity, which made him according to the divine image. He is a vessel, gathering and preserving the spirit that was poured into him by the Deity. He shelters it but his nature as a vessel is only fulfilled because of it: without the spirit, man is a mere aggregate of red clay. Thus, Adam is both of the earth, of the skies, and of the divine. He gathers the three in a single location in the universe, becoming the focal point of the creation as a whole.

Man is nevertheless also very similar to other beings, as he, like the plants, comes from the earth and elevates himself toward the skies. Adam thus perfectly fits within the Φύσις of the universe. He forms one of its branches, one that is tended with an extreme care by the Deity, but one that is nonetheless fully part of the Φύσις organism. At this point, he is completely carried by its flow, having yet to receive the possibility of consciously resisting it, something that requires a will to will. Adam has yet to enter language, to enter the dwelling that he will inhabit. As he is formed, and before being placed in the garden of Eden, Adam is immersed in a primordial environment, which may be the “tohu-bohu,” an unformed earth covered with a mist watering it,⁹⁹ both oneiric and cataclysmic. His mind, which is like a blank slate, then begins to experience the earth and the skies: the material world, space, time, movement, becoming and decay. This primordial environment, however, only gives him the experience of a newborn, as he has only very limited possibilities to interact with it.

Soon after being made to dwell in the garden of Eden, the first divine law is then given to Adam: “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you

⁹⁹ Gen 2:6.

shall die.”¹⁰⁰ This prohibition creates a first delimitation of the sacred from the profane. It sets a spatial boundary for man, who is the servant of the garden. He is free within the frame of his duties, as the high priest of a temple, whose power comes from his obedience and his respect for the difference between creator and creature, and comes from the divine law. This command also sets a temporal boundary, separating the period of obedience from the one of transgression. While he stays within the boundaries set by the law, Adam is given eternal life. He is under the skies, upon the earth, bound to witness the Φύσις in its fullness, in a state of continuous bliss under the benevolent gaze of the Deity. If man transgresses this command, however, he will then enter another era, one characterized by the loss of eternal life and the fall toward the certainty of death. He would depart from the East, from the garden, and fall toward the West, farther from the divine, farther from the tree of life. He would still be under the skies and on the earth, but his horizon would then be limited to a fraction of the Φύσις, and he would need to toil¹⁰¹ to survive, and would need to reproduce in order for his descendants to continue the walk on the path toward redemption.

When the first commandment is uttered, a veil is nonetheless still placed over language, and Adam remains blind to it. Language has already been created, but the first man has yet to learn it. The Law was given *within* language,¹⁰² as a sentence, but man has yet to make language *his*. The world is already created, and the first Law is primarily worldly: it can be heard on the earth, as an earthly sound, but its meaning can only be perceived by those who can enter the world. This first command also delimitates a space within the world. The first law is divine, a sacred command, which must remain preserved without alteration. A Law that separates the sacred language from the profane one, and through which the lawful is differentiated from the unlawful. But for now, man has yet to enter the world, and he can thus only hear it as an earthly sound: he can hear its signifier but not perceive its signified. In the same manner that the plants and the animals were talked to by the

¹⁰⁰ Gen 2:16–17.

¹⁰¹ It can be remarked that the Hebrew word designating this “work” is closely linked with the root-word expressing the notion of “service,” notably the service of the Deity: עבד [‘b-d].

¹⁰² The Law is given “within language,” and not “through language,” something which would imply an extra-linguistic transcendence of the Law.

Deity without them being able to understand the exhortations that they heard, or like Adam, to whom authority was given over the creatures through an oral declaration before he was formed, here again, the first man witnesses a use of language without being able to perceive its significance. He may see language from a distance, as a mysterious dwelling place, but he has yet to be able to enter it. Like other laws, the first law will foremost constitute a guide for man's being, something helping him to become what he is meant to be. Divine laws are given *within* language, forming a link between man's being and his destiny, and they will thus be a central element of the present (hi)story of language and being in the biblical narrative.

At this point, Adam is thrown into the phenomenon of Eden, completely caught in the immediacy of the task he has been given in it. Without language, he is very similar to the other creatures of the earth, who are driven by their instincts and have no capacity to reflect on the past or to project themselves onto future possibilities. Adam lives in pure *presence*, but like a domesticated creature, he nonetheless has a capacity to perceive his environment and rudimentary pre-linguistic commands. Indeed, even though the first law is given to man in oral form, Adam could still have understood it without a real mastery of language, in the same manner that domesticated creatures like cats and dogs can understand a prohibition given orally by their master, without understanding the words but nevertheless associating the utterance with a precise action, which is perceived as prohibited. This may be explained by the link between world and earth. The signs may be accurately perceived by creatures outside the world, because their signifier is not necessarily arbitrary: they may share a resemblance with what they signify. An onomatopoeia, for example, may be correctly interpreted, even by people speaking unrelated languages, as its signifier is not an arbitrary meta-physical construction but rather a direct image of an earthly phenomenon. Any dweller of the earth who has experienced the physical phenomenon which is pointed out by the onomatopoeia may correctly perceive its meaning, without the need to dwell in the world of the person uttering it or even any world at all. The first command may thus have been understood by Adam, but why would the Deity proceed in such a manner to give its first and perhaps most critical command?

To give Adam his primordial choice between eternal life and a

certain death using only a verbal command may be seen as a way to tempt him, as his mind had yet to mature with the help of a richer life experience, and in particular an experience of thinking. He is for now only an earthly creature, one which does not know the world. By commanding Adam like a shepherd commands his flock, the prohibition was not inscribed in his mind, as an idea, but rather imprinted in his senses, in his raw experience of the phenomenon. The taboo is made instinctual rather than the fruit of the *logos*, eliminating the possibility of an inadvertent transgression. In order for man to violate the command, and thereby change his “heavenly horizon,” that is, to leave the East and the time of eternal life, he would have to be able to deliberately transgress a law. Therefore, the fact that this command is given to man before he enters language would not be an unfair temptation, but rather a precaution made to ensure the fairness of the choice that man will have to make.

The command is the first sign paving the way toward a new era. For now, the first man is entirely caught in the flow of the Φύσις. He can neither embrace it authentically nor refuse or strive against it: he can only be carried away. Far from being a fault, however, this situation constitutes a prerequisite for the coming of the new era and it gives man a unique opportunity, one that very few will experience after him: the opportunity to give himself completely to the phenomenon. Adam is now completely earthly and heavenly. He can let himself be infiltrated to his core by these elements and be one with them. This unity with his surroundings, with the ground of his life, makes him oblivious to himself, as there is no grip where an *ego* could develop. His life is paced by his reactions to the signs of the skies and by the shaping of the earth that he must undertake in order to fulfill his vital needs. Being one with the skies and the earth also means that Adam cannot distinguish them, just as he cannot distinguish himself from them. To be completely earthly and heavenly therefore implies an obliviousness to these elements. He is absorbed in the present phenomenon. He “uses” the earth and sees the skies, but he perceives them only as ready-to-hand, that is, as means used to fulfill an immediate need, as tools for sustenance. Their true nature, that is, their larger role in the Φύσις, remains concealed to him, as he sees only their surface. This primordial mode of being gives Adam a deep experience of the phenomenon tied to the elements, as he

cannot escape or even retreat from them. He is a wandering creature roaming the earth, night and day under the skies, scorched by the sun, drenched by the rain, frozen by the snow, without a shelter to retreat into, without a way to escape the phenomenon. This makes him totally dependent on the universe surrounding him and on the will of the Deity that watches over him, without any illusion of control over his life. This is a *lethe*, an obliviousness to something that is too pervasive to be perceived, something that is so close and so part of man's life that he cannot take any distance from it, thereby rendering it invisible to him.

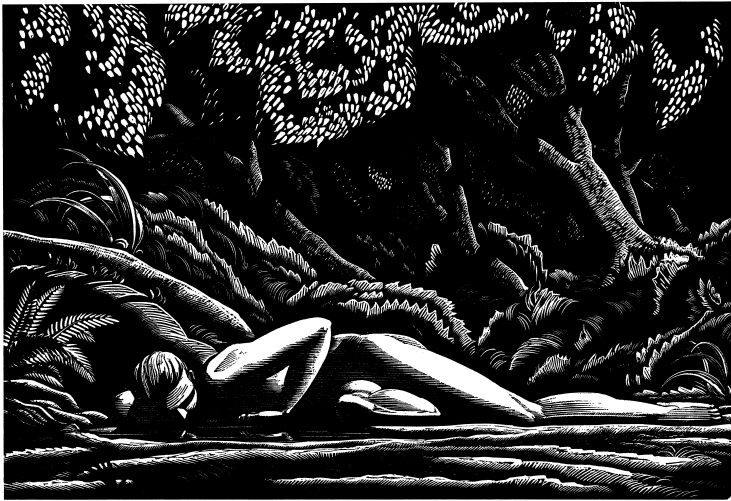


Fig. 4 *On the naked earth*. When the sun goes down, without shelter and without light to guide his steps, man lies naked on the bare earth, curled up to protect himself from the onslaught of the skies. Sleeping in the mud from which he was formed, he is one with the Φύσις, as a flower barely protruding from the soil, ignorant of the fact that what comes from the earth shall soon be reclaimed by it. Embracing the earth while the skies fill his lungs and reach the innermost parts of his body, man is a perfect symbiosis of the earth and the skies. One with everything, possessing no “thing,” man is nonetheless blind. A care-free life, but one without a vessel where he could pour out his will, a life without salt...

Thus, Adam is at this point one with the skies, with the earth, and with the Φύσις as a whole. A world that stands out from these elements has been cleared, and it is already being built, but it nonetheless remains inaccessible to him. But man cannot even see the Φύσις, the earth nor the skies, as he is fully part of them, conflated with them. In order to be able to perceive something, man first needs to be distinguished from it, to retreat from it, but this does not necessitate a severing, nor does it require that he become a “subject” who observes an “object.” A house can indeed act as a shelter from the forces of the skies and the hardships of the earth, but it nevertheless remains beneath the skies and upon the earth. It provides a dwelling where one can retreat from the intensity of the elements without being completely severed from them. More than this, the skies and the earth are what provide the space and the materials needed for the house to exist. They allow man to build a structure that will keep him at a distance from them. For now, Adam is a creature living under the stars, without such a shelter, but as the Persians who tried their children by making them live ten years of their youth in the open air,¹⁰³ this only constitutes a preparatory stage, which soon is brought to an end by the Deity.

2.2.3 The emergence of human language: building the house of being.

Once the soil of Eden has given birth to the garden, the Deity forms all the creatures filling the land and it declares that man should not be alone and that he is in need of a helper. Then, an event takes place by the will of the creator, one that is quite inconspicuous in the monumental scale of the book but that nonetheless could be counted as one of the most impactful events of the narrative: the emergence of human language.

Language will reveal itself to be one of the masterpieces of the creation, a work that will reveal the universe to man, in the same manner that an inspired painting reveals a particular worldview to a receptive beholder. This work will not be a divine creation *ex-nihilo*, nor a direct product of the Φύσις. It will not be the

¹⁰³ Xenophon. *The Cyropædia, or Institution of Cyrus, and the Hellenics, or Grecian History*. Bohn, 1855: 6. Print.

work of human hands, nor the product of his psyche. Language is unique in that it is the fruit of the communion of the Deity with the first man, a work whose foundation and origin are laid by the Deity but whose building up is done by the hands of man. When Adam gives a name to a creature in the narrative, he thereby forms a building block in the meta-narrative, one used for the edification of the house, for the building of language. Individual blocks are then accumulated and arrayed according to a particular structure, establishing relations between them, which can be of different types: proximity, opposition, similarity etc. Little by little, sign after sign, language takes form, built on the foundation laid by the creator.

As the first human language takes form; as the house is raised from the ground, it begins to form an enclosure surrounding Adam, a boundary separating him from the environment that gave him his first experiences of the universe. The house partly prevents Adam from seeing the skies and from being in direct contact with the earth. It shuts him off from the elements. This closing off nonetheless paves the way for an opening. Indeed, “the boundary is that from which something begins its presenting,”¹⁰⁴ the German master tells us. The building blocks partially conceal the earth and the skies from Adam, but they also clear a space in which something else can emerge and reveal itself to man. Language, as the house of signs, provides Adam with a shelter from the skies and the earth, from the harshness of the elements, from the blinding light, that is, from the constant flux of the Φύσις that overwhelms his senses and blinds him to his own facticity.

¹⁰⁴ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2001: 152. Print. (Building Dwelling Thinking); Original German: “Die Grenze ist nicht das, wobei etwas aufhört, sondern, wie die Griechen es erkannten, die Grenze ist jenes, von woher etwas sein Wesen beginnt.” From: GA 7: 156.

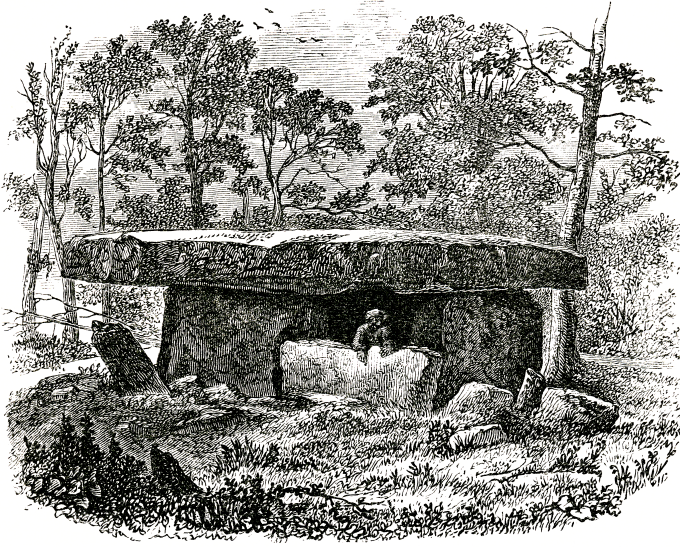


Fig. 5 *Building the house*. With his chisel, man begins to create vessels into which his will can be poured. The resulting products of Τέχνη are the first “things” that stand against the Φύσις. The carved blocks bear the marks of man’s tool, and they break the continuous harmony of the Φύσις. The spoiling of nature’s beauty is the price that man has to pay in order to build the shelter that will open up a space where he can start to create, and answer the call of his destiny. When his house is sealed shut by the last block, quenching the blinding light of the Φύσις, man will then finally be able to see...

The signs formed by Adam mark the first expressions of his will, and through it, the appearance of a force able to counter the Φύσις, the natural order and growth of the universe. This force is the Τέχνη, both art and technique, which can either follow the flow of Φύσις or go against it. The house is a work, a thing partly built by the will of man, and therefore not “natural,” but it nonetheless is always located within the Φύσις as it rests on the earth and beneath the skies, affected by the elements. The ancient debate concerning the “nature of the names” can thus be put to

rest, or at least be relegated to a secondary place during the examination of the birth of human language in the narrative, as the two choices proposed by Plato overlook a third, more convincing possibility: signs are neither “natural” nor “conventional,” they are the product of the Τέχνη, product that is located within the Φύσις, and affected by it. Adam makes the building blocks according to Τέχνη but these blocks are made from the earth, dried by the sun and eroded by the wind, under the skies. From the earth, because they need the earthly matter as a support for their existence, whether it be the air for a sound, wood or clay for a tablet, or even a body in the case of a gesture. Eroded by the work of the skies, because they are affected by the flow of time and history, which change their nature. The signs are constrained by both earth and skies: limited by the nature of the earthly materials and by the space-time opened up by the skies, which restrict their physical and temporal extension. Even the climate of the land may constrain them, as the languages spoken in lands with extremely cold winters, like Mongolian or Inuktitut, which are spoken barely opening the mouth as the cold instantly freezes the front teeth, thereby affecting the nature of their signifiers.

Language gives man a space to retreat from the phenomenon, but a retreat does not imply a severance. The house indeed shields Adam from the overwhelming power of the skies and the earth, but he nonetheless cannot completely sever himself from them. They are indeed more than the ground of all his experiences: the house of being is itself grounded into the earth, made from it, and it also stands under the skies. The house of signs depends on the elements but its closed nature, as the product of Τέχνη, nonetheless opens up new possibilities for Adam, a new type of experience, one grounded on the phenomenon of the elements and yet different from it: it opens up a *world*.

The opening of the world not only represents the advent of a new environment, it also marks the fading of an old one. Before, Adam was a mere sojourner on the earth, under the open skies, but he now becomes a dweller, sheltered in the house of signs. The house is not a prison, as he can still wander around the earth and behold the naked sky, but as a dweller, he is now irremediably driven back to his dwelling and his wanderings are all done with the house in mind, as a center of gravity toward which he is constantly pulled back. This implies that the emergence of language

does not prevent the first man from accessing the phenomenon of the earth, but only that this access is now deeply influenced by language. Adam's relation to the earth and the skies cannot be the same as before, as he now knows something different. He has seen that his previous life was not all that there is, and he cannot go back to a blissful ignorance. Even though his environment has been irreversibly affected by the emergence of the house of signs, a trace of the past environment nonetheless remains, in his memory. The old and new stations, that is, the two different linguistic environments between which the language-vehicle travels, can be contrasted by Adam through the remembrance of his life as a sojourner, when his horizon was limited to the earth and the skies. This contrasting will be a key element in Adam's transition from a creature among others to being a true human being, to being a son of the Almighty. Before examining this transition further, the nature of the house of signs and of the world it opens will be examined, from both a technical and a poetical (that is, an earthlier) point of view.

2.2.4 The essence of language

The present work endeavors to tell the (hi)story of language and being in the biblical narrative. This narrative does not directly address the question of the nature and essence of language, and yet this question pervades it from Genesis to Revelation. Our own languages, including the language in which these very lines are written, themselves embed a constructed view of language, inherited from a long tradition, millennia in the making. An example of such a view is the fact that we tend to view language as a tool, something that can be "used" by the man who "possesses" it. This tradition is predominantly technical, estranged from the poetic and the experience of the earth that is at its source. This technicity, this highly metaphysical nature of the scholarly tradition concerning the study of language, naturally has its place on man's path of thinking, as it allows man to swiftly and efficiently progress in the construction of technical representations of the nature of language. The Τέχνη must nonetheless be balanced with the Φύσις; the world must remain anchored to the earth, otherwise, it would lose its purpose, which is to lead man to an experience of his essential being, in the twilight of world and earth. Therefore, the

following presentation of the various facets of language will first summarize the achievements of the technical tradition, and it will then attempt to bring it closer to the earth, closer to the language of the poets and the experience of the phenomenon.

In order to both reap the fruits of the technical tradition and escape its limitations, the truth of this tradition must be discerned from its falsehood. One must winnow what elevates from what misleads, what can be compatible with the poetic and what cannot, so that the (hi)story of language can be seen as a manifestation of the strife of world and earth and of the strife of Φύσις and Τέχνη. The technical tradition is nonetheless manifold, and its different facets must be examined independently. The common element in each facet will be the establishment of a link with the meta-narrative, seeing language as a house of signs, as it is through this particular dimension that the (hi)story of language finds its most meaningful expression. The first of these facets shows language as a set of signs.

2.2.4.1 Language as signs.

Language has in the preceding pages already been described as the “house of signs” in the meta-narrative. This appellation will thus first be justified, and signs will be defined. S^t Augustine seems to be the first to have developed a theory of signs, which defines them technically as “a thing which causes us to think of something beyond the impression the thing itself makes upon the senses.”¹⁰⁵ As S^t Augustine’s definition ignores the fact that a sign can itself become the “thing” pointed out by another sign, this definition will now be extended, following the work of Saussure:¹⁰⁶ a sign would be something that establishes a link between two elements, a *signifier*, which is the external appearance of the sign, and a *signified*, which is what the sign represents. A signifier is thus a doorway that allows man to access a concept through intentionality, a con-

¹⁰⁵ Saint Augustine. *On Christian Doctrine*. N.p.: Liberal Arts Press, 1958: 34. Print; Original Latin: “Signum est enim res praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus, aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem uenire.” From: Augustine, and R. P. H. Green. *De Doctrina Christiana*. Oxford University Press, 1995: 56. Print. (De doctrina Christiana II. r. 1, 5–7).

¹⁰⁶ Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Cours de linguistique générale*. Lausanne: Payot, 1985. Print.

cept that can not only represent a material, earthly object like the animals named by Adam, but also immaterial, purely worldly concepts like “love,” or “faith.”

Signs are the building blocks of language. They are formed, combined, and shaped for the edification of an abode, the opening of a space for man to dwell in and that can contain the outpour of his will. Language is the set of all these building blocks and of what they form when combined together, but it is not a rigid structure like a ziggurat standing still, waiting to be eroded by the work of time. It rather is partly like a plant, composed of a myriad of ever moving, ever changing elements, and yet it is also a construct of man’s will and technique, one that stands on the earth and is affected by the skies. Language can thus be abstractly seen as a pool of signs, itself composed of a pool of signifiers matched with a pool of signifieds. This resembles Umberto Eco’s definition of a sign, which he saw as “an element of an expression plane conventionally correlated to one (or several) elements of a content plane.”¹⁰⁷ The “expression plane,” that is, the set of all signifiers, is formed by all the blocks formed by Adam, including all their possible combinations. This last aspect is key but rather difficult to visualize. Indeed, each possible arrangement of signs can itself be seen as a sign, and the number of these arrangements is infinite. The house of signs is thus always composed of an infinite number of signs,¹⁰⁸ but, perhaps contrary to intuition, infinity does not imply an absence of limits or boundaries. This can be shown using an analogy with elementary mathematics: the series of all integers (1, 2, 3 etc.) is infinite, and yet it does not contain any fraction, for example, thus showing that the set of all integers is bounded. The house of signs, language, exhibits similar properties: it can be composed of an infinite number of signs, and yet it does not contain all possible signs. New signs can be added to it but they can also fade away, making the house an infinitely complex organism, which nonetheless stands within a definite boundary.

The house of signs therefore establishes relations between the blocks that compose it and other signified elements, which can potentially comprise anything within the universe, including the house itself, and the product of man’s imagination. Through this

¹⁰⁷ Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics*. Indiana University Press, 1976: 48. Print.

¹⁰⁸ The house can nonetheless also be seen as a single, all-encompassing sign.

semiosis, that is, this process of association between signifiers and signifieds, the house can gather the universe within its boundaries so that it can be offered to man to behold. It brings the signifieds together in one place, no matter how remote or inaccessible they may be, a place where the first man can attempt to establish relations between them and where the inner workings of the Φύσις can be revealed to him. Through his building work, man can represent the universe as he sees it, or even as he wants it to be. The fidelity of the work with the original depends on the will and the skills of man. His work can not only imitate but also create. The house can contain an isomorphism of the universe, that is, a one-to-one correspondence between all elements of the universe and the blocks forming the house of signs, but it can also transform it to make it fit his own vision. Thus, the world opened in the house of signs is not only an image of the Φύσις of the universe: it rather is an extension of it, a secondary Φύσις that grows into a new realm, a new “world.” The house of signs is nonetheless different than the “primary” Φύσις in the sense that it is not only “natural,” but also the product of the Τέχνη, and thus a hybrid space, coupling properties of both Φύσις and Τέχνη: (ideally) based on the former but built thanks to the latter.

We thus see that language is rooted in the phenomenon, see that the house of signs stands beneath the skies and that it is built with sign-blocks made of earth. The becoming of language from the phenomenon is like a plant generating the seed leading to its own perpetuation. The plant is the source of the becoming of other plants, which themselves will become the source of others, illustrating the essence of the Φύσις through which the universe becomes the source of its own change. This does not imply the absence of the Deity in this process, as the Φύσις is generation *from within* itself but not *by* itself. Language thus emerges from the Φύσις, and language is Φύσις. It will, in a certain sense, nonetheless gain prominence over the phenomenon: the earth and the skies will continue to form its basis, but they will become a background to which little attention will be given, a fact that may be both necessary and yet regrettable. The ever-changing house of signs takes over the earth, like each year the leaves of the palm tree grow over the ones of the past seasons, which withered away but left a basis for the growth of others. The building of the first house of signs marks the beginning of a new stage of the Φύσις: a **meta-**

φύσις, which not only comprises the phenomenon, the earth and the skies, but also representations of the phenomenon, that is, the noumenon. In the Bible, this also signals the beginning of the meta-narrative of language and being, which tells of the (hi)story of this meta-φύσις, of its relationship with the Φύσις, and of man's destiny within it.

Furthermore, a crucial property of language, which makes it different than the rest of the Φύσις, is that it not only can represent the phenomenon but can also represent other representations, and even represent itself. Language is autoreferential; language can talk about language, and language can generate language through semiosis, through the creation of signs. It means that just as language arose from the phenomenon and opened up a world to man, other types of new environments may later arise from language. The house of signs therefore not only gathers the whole universe in its midst, it also potentially can extend the Φύσις into new realms, outside of the phenomenon, in a meta-φύσις, a meta-physics, a process that finds its origins in signs, products of the union of Φύσις and Τέχνη. The autoreferential nature of the house also allows the opening of a potentially infinite number of meta-levels, higher levels of abstraction from the meta-φύσις: meta-meta-φύσις, meta-3-φύσις etc, only limited by man's will and cognitive capabilities.

2.2.4.2 Language as agreement

Perhaps one of the most fundamental characteristics of language is that it arises from an agreement. In the biblical narrative, the Deity initiates the naming of the animals by parading them in front of the first man, expecting him to assign them names. If the Deity is the initiator of the building of the house of signs, Adam is its master builder: he forms signs establishing links between signifiers and signified elements of his choosing, that is, links between blocks of the house and elements of the universe, including the house itself. These links are acknowledged by the Deity and they form the basis of the first agreement between Adam and his creator, thereby allowing interpersonal communication. This raises a question: how could Adam establish an agreement on language without using a language? This problem of the origin of language was already pointed out by Thomas Reid, who also attempted a reply to this

question, from the point of view of logic rather than concerning the biblical narrative:

If mankind had no natural language they could never have invented an artificial one through their reason and ingenuity. For all artificial language supposes some contract or agreement to attach a certain meaning to signs; so there must be contracts or agreements before the use of artificial signs; but there can't be any contract or agreement when there are no signs and no language; therefore there must be a natural language before any artificial language can be invented — Q.e.d.¹⁰⁹

The Scotsman's answer implies that Adam would have needed to receive a rudimentary language allowing him to express an agreement prior to naming the animals, or, in other terms, that the Deity would have needed to build the foundations of the house of signs. Language thus could not be claimed to be the work of man. It would rather be a gift bestowed upon him, a gift that he can nonetheless nurture and develop. In the words of Quine: "we may kick away our ladder only after we have climbed it."¹¹⁰ The foundations of the house of signs become secondary once it is fully built, but nothing can stand without it.

Even with such an a priori linguistic basis, however, how would someone know if the persons he is making the agreement with really agree on the same thing? A color-blind person could agree with someone about the meaning of the word "red" until he is shown that he cannot see this color and therefore cannot understand this word. This problem can also be seen in Quine's famous "gavagai" thought experiment,¹¹¹ which can be summarized as follows, slightly adapting it to our purpose here.

A researcher starts an expedition to meet an isolated tribe speaking a language unknown to him. As he stands with a tribesman, a rabbit goes by, and the man suddenly shouts "gavagai! gavagai!" The researcher would tend to think that the word "gavagai"

¹⁰⁹ Reid, Thomas, and Derek R. Brookes. *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense: A Critical Edition*. Edinburgh University Press, 2000: 51. Print.

¹¹⁰ Quine, Willard Van Orman, Patricia Smith Churchland, and Dagfinn Follesdal. *Word and Object*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013: 4. Print.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*: 4.

designates rabbits. He would thereby begin to join the linguistic agreement of the tribe. The researcher, however, has no way to be sure that “gavagai” does in fact mean “rabbit,” rather than “meat,” “skin,” or “a gift for my spouse.” No matter how much time the researcher spends with the tribesmen, he can never be absolutely sure that they really agree on the meaning of the words that they use.

How does this relate to Adam’s agreement? Firstly, it shows that trust is a prerequisite to any agreement. To talk to someone is thus a show of faith that one shares a common ground with another human or, in other words, that one has the same view of the house of signs as another person. Secondly, it also shows that the agreement always needs to be reevaluated. The blocks of the house of signs are identical to all the men seeing them but what they gather, that is, what they signify, is also partly in the eye of the beholder. Each person who joins this linguistic agreement would have to ensure that all the dwellers see the same thing through the sign-blocks of the house, something possible through a continuous reevaluation of the agreement, so that people can dwell in the house of signs together and cooperate for its edification. The house is nonetheless also constructed with a harmonious architecture and its blocks are heavily interdependent, implying that by looking at the house as a whole, and how it gathers the universe to itself, incoherences and misalignments between people can be pointed out. In other words: the interdependency of signs can reveal deficiencies in the linguistic agreement.

Such an agreement nevertheless should not give the impression that it bestows a special status on what is agreed on. No matter how primordial or important is an agreed relationship, the agreement does not imply that it is “true.” As Francis Bacon said: “Even if men all went mad in the same way they might agree one with another well enough.”¹¹² Therefore, even though the Adamic language arises as an agreement between Adam and the Deity, this does not necessarily give it more legitimacy to describe the $\Phi\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma\iota\varsigma$ of the universe than any other language. Even the cornerstone of

¹¹² Bacon, Francis. *Selected Philosophical Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999: 93. Print. Original Latin: “Anticipationes satis firmæ sunt ad consensum; quandoquidem, si homines etiam insanirent ad unum modum et conformiter, illi satis bene inter se congruere possent.” From: Bacon, Francis. *The Works of Francis Bacon*. J. Johnson, 1803: 5. Print. (Aphorisms § 27).

the house of signs built by Adam may be supplanted by another, one that would be more solid and better in line with the *Φύσις*. In the meta-narrative, the agreement represents the sharing of a single house, the dwelling in a common abode, where the different parties are all associated with the maintenance, transformation, or potential extension of the house.

2.2.4.3 Language as dominion

The naming of the creatures by Adam coincides with the Deity's declaration of his dominion over them. Language is clearly tied to this declaration: by forming the signs and attributing them to each creature, the first man takes possession of them. By building the house of signs, he can bring the named elements to him, to his *presence*: he re-presents. The sign invokes the signified. It gathers all things to the view of those who dwell in the house.

The dominion of man over the creatures is therefore not merely earthly: man is not the strongest, nor the tallest, nor the quickest creature on Earth. He does not live the longest, nor does he have the most developed senses, but what gives him authority over the creatures is that it is him who brings them to *be*, in the *world* and not merely on the *earth*, by bestowing names to them. Thus, while indeed "animals and plants have no 'world', because [they have] no *language*,"¹¹³ this does not imply that animals and plants cannot be brought to the world opened up by language. As Heidegger said:

About the "word" we also said that it not only stands in a relation to the thing, but that the word is what first brings that given thing, as the being that is, into this "is"; that the word is what holds the thing there and relates it and so to speak provides its maintenance with which to be a thing.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ TBA. Original German: "Tier und Pflanze haben keine 'Welt', weil keine Sprache." From: GA 73.1: 349.

¹¹⁴ Heidegger, Martin. *On the Way to Language*. New York: HarperCollins, 1982: 82. Print; Original German: "Wir sagten ein übriges zum »Wort«, daß es nicht nur in einem Verhältnis zum Ding stehe, sondern daß das Wort das jeweilige Ding ab das Seiende, das ist, erst in dieses »ist« bringe, darin halte, es verhalte, ihm gleichsam den Unterhalt gewähre, ein Ding zu sein." From: GA 12:177.

Thus, by bestowing their names, Adam is the one who brings the creature to *be*. The Deity formed them and placed them on the earth, but it lets man bring them to the world, perhaps because it made Adam according to its own image, and because of the fact that the exercising of a power over a dominion is part of what it entails. Reciprocally, to have dominion over the animals may also lead man to realize that this dominion is bounded and that the position he occupies in the Deity's dominion is similar to the one occupied by the creatures in his. Man's dominion may therefore not be meant as a favor but may rather be a way to humble him, to make him realize that he also is a creature, differing from the others only by his dwelling in a house of being, which opens up the world to him.

Adam's dominion is the world, which towers over the earth and therefore comprehends it through the gathering power of the house of signs. The world nonetheless originates from the earth and it rests on it. Man's domain thus remains enclosed within the divine one: it is bounded by the earthly and the heavenly. Adam could be overcome by countless creatures but no creature can venture in his domain, in the world, without his assent. They only become part of the world through man's in-vocation, which gives him a certain control over them. This power nonetheless comes with a danger: through his control of the world, and of everything in it, man could delude himself into thinking that his power extends beyond the limits of the world, on the earth and in the Φύσις as a whole. The narrative would later mention this peril, through the mouth of St Paul: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth." (1 Co 3:6–7¹¹⁵). As will be later seen, Adam has yet to learn this.

Language thus is what empowers Adam over the creatures. He is the ζῶον λόγον ἔχον,¹¹⁶ not read as *animal rationale* but rather as the "living being that possesses language." This appellation should nonetheless be questioned: does man really possess language? Or is the relationship between the two more complex than it appears? Indeed, as the German philosopher argues: "Man acts as though

¹¹⁵ "ἐγὼ ἐφύτευσα, Ἀπολλῶς ἐπότισεν, ἀλλὰ ὁ θεὸς ἡΰξανεν • ὥστε οὔτε ὁ φυτεύων ἐστίν τι οὔτε ὁ ποτίζων ἀλλ' ὁ αὐξάνων θεός." (1Co 3:6–7).

¹¹⁶ Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*. Indiana University Press, 2009: 76. Print.

he were the shaper and master of language, while in fact language remains the master of man.”¹¹⁷ Both are perhaps true? Man both possesses language and is also possessed by it. Man possesses the house of signs because he built it, but he is also possessed by it because he becomes its dweller; because he is encompassed by the house, which filters and defines his interactions with the rest of the universe. Man therefore holds sway over the creatures through language, but the Deity also holds sway over man through it, as it built its foundation: the creator is master over the earth upon which the world rests and over the skies beneath which this earth stands. The Deity thus remains able to topple the house, if man’s dominion *of* and *through* language would lead to a disregard for the divine authority.

Furthermore, even though many creatures may understand rudimentary signs, none other than man has the ability to build and transform the house of signs. The dominion over the things that are named is nonetheless limited by the level of access that man can enjoy concerning the signified. As the creatures are paraded in front of him, the first man gains a certain degree of insight about them. This insight nonetheless does not comprehend their entire nature. Subsequent invocations of the signs remain bounded by the extent of the signified, meaning that while the house of signs gives Adam a glimpse of all the universe, his vision is stained by numerous blind spots. The fact that man can in-voke the Deity using different names, some of which will be directly revealed to him like *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים) or *Yahweh* (יְהוָה), thus does not imply that his dominion reaches over the skies, that he can comprehend God. The signified of the names of the Deity is reduced to the meager vision man has of it. Without a clear sight of what these names signify, man cannot claim that the extent of his dominion would include his creator, whose presence goes beyond the house.

¹¹⁷ Stassen, Manfred. *Martin Heidegger: Philosophical and Political Writings*. London: A&C Black, 2003: 267. Print. (... Poetically, Man Dwells...); Original German: “Der Mensch gebärdet sich, als sei er Bildner und Meister der Sprache, während doch sie die Herrin des Menschen bleibt.” From GA 7: 193.

2.2.4.4 Language as expression

One of the most ancient and pervading conceptions of language is to see it as a form of code allowing the conversion of “inner thoughts,” a *verbum cordis*, into physical signs that can be shared with others. The French philosopher Paul Ricoeur followed this tradition and defined language as “the process by which private experience is made public. Language is the exteriorization thanks to which an impression is transcended and becomes an expression.”¹¹⁸ This view, no matter how familiar, is based on the assumption that “thought” precedes language, and that we can think outside of language. Unsurprisingly, this conception has led to a relentless pursuit of a hypothetic “language of thought” or “mentalese,” as it was called by Jerry Fodor,¹¹⁹ a language that remains as elusive as St Augustine’s *verbum cordis*. The fundamental assumption that language is the ex-expression of a mentalese can thus be reconsidered.

Without language, man remains a prisoner of the earth, without a world, but the world is where man can truly see the universe. Language is indeed a form of ex-expression but it will be argued here that what is poured out is of a different nature than in the aforementioned view. When man crafts a sign, a block of the house of signs, he does not imitate another block using a different material, forming an external sign from another inner sign. The block rather contains the outpour of man’s pure will. Meaning does not preexist the sign, as language is where meaning can take place by the outpouring of the will into the building of a sign. This change of view does not simply substitute the elusive mentalese with another elusive concept, the will. It rather allows us to distinguish the question of the will as a source for the creation of signs from the question of language as an event of ex-expression of the will. The will is perhaps what we are most familiar with, something that “alone is really known to us, absolutely and completely known,”¹²⁰ and yet it is incredibly hard to describe it precisely. In the present

¹¹⁸ Ricoeur, Paul. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. TCU Press, 1976: 19. Print.

¹¹⁹ Fodor, Jerry A. *The Language of Thought*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975. Print.

¹²⁰ Quote by Nietzsche, concerning Schopenhauer’s view of the will, found in *Beyond Good and Evil*. See Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Random House Publishing Group, 2009: 19. Print.

study devoted to language and being, an examination of this concept would be out of place, and thus the question of the nature of the *will* will be put aside, as it is not essential to the unveiling of the meta-narrative, so that our attention can now be focused on the manner in which the will is ex-pressed in language.

Firstly, in the narrative, language is an ex-expression of the will of the Deity that built its foundations and allows man to extend and appropriate it. This capacity to build further is in itself a “work”: the Deity does not build language itself, but it formed Adam according to its image, in such a way that he would also be able to create, to express himself through the work of his hands, thereby raising the earth up toward the skies and shaping it according to his will. The divine impulse leading to the birth of language and languages is in itself an act of meta-creation: a creation of an artwork that will itself create secondary works. This is the most fundamental way in which language is ex-expression.

Secondly, language is the receptacle of man’s will. By forming signs, he not only creates a language (as *langue*) but also language (as *langage*). Each act of language *in* which Adam ex-presses himself is an act of building or reshaping of the house of signs, which is continuously growing and evolving. Each block forming the house is itself a work of art, with “art” seen as Τέχνη: the conjunction of the earthly material and the human will, both being united in the sign, which sets up a world. Man’s ex-expression in language is by essence a counteracting of the Φύσις. It is fundamentally “unnatural”: the natural, the Φύσις, is indeed what takes place when man does not ex-press himself. With the possible exception of some heavenly creatures, man seems to be the only being within the Φύσις to whom this power of ex-expression, of going against the current of “nature,” has been given.

The works of man all embody the strife of Φύσις and Τέχνη, as he pours his will into them, ex-pressing himself and creating meaning, but is meaning to be found in every man-made work? Are all works ex-pressions? Yes, but this answer requires an explanation. The house built by Adam is not the house of words but the house of signs. All words are signs but not all signs are words: a painting can be considered a sign, as it re-presents something. It is a signifier that can point out to something else: a signified, which is what the painting “means.” In a masterful *im-expressionist*

painting, the touch of the painter is easily perceivable. We can clearly feel what he expressed and perceive the fruit of the will that is imprinted on the canvas. This being said, would a randomly chosen, highly realistic imitation of a natural landscape also necessarily have a meaning? Once again, yes, it would always have a meaning, in the sense that such a mimesis of nature would then only be a re-production of the meaning intended by the author of the universe, who initiated the Φύσις. The Φύσις is itself the work of the Deity, deploying itself under the skies, but the essence of all works is the strife of earth and world, the strife of the materiality of the work and of its meaning, of the physical and the meta-physical, the force of the earthly experience and the power of the worldly *logos*. The work needs a world in order to truly be a work, and as it was seen earlier, this world is opened up by the house of signs, which is language in the large sense of the term, including all forms of semiosis.

The building of the house of signs is the “Ur-work” that sets up a world, and thereby allows other works to be, through the strife of earth and world. What is this strife? According to Heidegger:

The earth cannot do without the openness of world if it is to appear in the liberating surge of its self-closedness. World, on the other hand, cannot float away from the earth if, as the prevailing breadth and path of all essential destiny, it is to ground itself on something decisive. In setting up world and setting forth earth the work instigates this strife. But this does not happen so that the work can simultaneously terminate and settle the conflict in an insipid agreement, but rather so that the strife remains a strife. By setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work accomplishes this strife. The work-being of the work consists in fighting the fight between world and earth. It is because the strife reaches its peak in the simplicity of intimacy that the unity of the work happens in the fighting of the fight.¹²¹

¹²¹ Heidegger, Martin. *Heidegger: Off the Beaten Track*. Cambridge University Press, 2002: 27. Print; Original German: “Die Erde kann das Offene der Welt nicht missen, soll sie selbst als Erde im befreiten Andrang ihres Sichverschließens erscheinen. Die Welt wiederum kann der Erde nicht entschweben, soll sie als waltende Weite und Bahn alles wesentlichen Geschickes sich auf ein

As Ur-work, language does not only open up a world but also the very possibility for a world to appear. Other works also set up a world but this world would always be contained in the Ur-world opened up by the house of signs. Language thus also is the location where the Ur-strife is taking place: not the strife set up by a particular work but the strife of earth and world as a whole. This Ur-strife originates in the ex-pression of the will of the Deity, but man enters the strifes it contains each time he ex-presses himself. Each act of language is a continuation of the strife, in which man brings the earth out of its concealment through the edification of the house of signs, which is like the temple described by Heidegger in the following quote:

The temple work, in setting up a world, does not let the material disappear; rather, it allows it to come forth for the very first time, to come forth, that is, into the open of the world of the work. The rock comes to bear and to rest and so first becomes rock; the metal comes to glitter and shimmer, the colors to shine, the sounds to ring, the word to speak. All this comes forth as the work sets itself back into the massiveness and heaviness of the stone, into the firmness and flexibility of the wood, into the hardness and gleam of the ore, into the lightening and darkening of color, into the ringing of sound, and the naming power of the word.¹²²

Entschiedenenes gründen. Indem das Werk eine Welt aufstellt und die Erde herstellt, ist es eine Anstiftung dieses Streites. Aber dieses geschieht nicht, damit das Werk den Streit in einem faden Übereinkommen zugleich niederschlage und schlichte, sondern damit der Streit ein Streit bleibe. Aufstellend eine Welt und herstellend die Erde vollbringt das Werk diesen Streit. Das Werksein des Werkes besteht in der Bestreitung des Streites zwischen Welt und Erde. Weil der Streit im Einfachen der Innigkeit zu seinem Höchsten kommt, deshalb geschieht in der Bestreitung des Streites die Einheit des Werkes." From: GA 5: 35–36.

¹²² Ibid.: 24; Original German: "Das Tempel-Werk dagegen läßt, indem es eine Welt aufstellt, den Stoff nicht verschwinden, sondern allererst hervorkommen und zwar im Offenen der Welt des Werkes: der Fels kommt zum Tragen und Ruhen und wird so erst Fels; die Metalle kommen zum Blitzen und Schimmern, die Farben zum Leuditen, der Ton zum Klingen, das Wort zum Sagen. All dieses kommt hervor, indem das Werk sich zurückstellt in das Massige und Schwere des Steins, in das Feste und Biegsame des Holzes, in die Härte und den Glanz des Erzes, in das Leuchten und Dunkeln der Farbe, in den Klang des Tones und in die Nennkraft des Wortes." From: GA 5: 32.

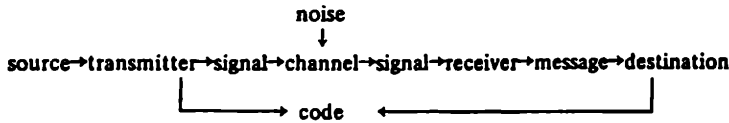
Therefore, perhaps the most striking way in which “the work praises the master,” the universe being the work and the Deity the master, is the central role of man as a creature of the master, man who sets up the world by raising the earth up in the air, the world which is openness and brings the earth out of its closedness, and out of its concealment. Man allows the earth to be the earth, and the world to be a world, and yet, he remains a mere creature under the skies, within the Φύσις. This creature nevertheless possesses an important peculiarity: it can strive against the Φύσις, through his ex-pression. However, while man has the ability to ex-press himself, he is also a very im-pressionable creature.



Fig. 6 *The strife of earth and world.* As the trees, whose roots are piercing the soil to extract the earth and to elevate it toward the skies, man is called to plunge his hands in the earth, to work it and edify the world.

As the German philosopher says: “language speaks” (*Die Sprache spricht*).¹²³ The house of signs also ex-presses itself. Not through its own will but rather through the imprints of the will of the men who built the house. The house hosts remnants of the will of men, remnants which themselves leave an im-pression on the dweller of the house. Man is therefore not only a source of ex-pression in language but also a location where language can be outpoured, im-pressing him.

¹²³ GA 12: 10.

Fig. 7 *Communication model.*

2.2.4.5 Language as communication

Different aspects of language have been technically described in the previous pages, mostly focusing on the personal relation that man has with it. Perhaps one of its most universally recognized function nonetheless is its use for so-called “interpersonal communication.” According to the German hermeneut Friedrich Schleiermacher, “language is what mediates sensuously and externally between utterer and listener.”¹²⁴ The American linguist Edward Sapir follows this line of thought, but is somewhat more precise, defining language as: “a purely human and noninstinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols.”¹²⁵ This definition is more interesting because it betrays the prejudice that ideas can exist prior to language. The most influential description of what communication is, however, certainly is the so-called “Shannon and Weaver” model, originating in the development of electronic telecommunications, but now also widely used in linguistics and semiotics to model human communication. Umberto Eco gives us his variation of this model in the following diagram:

This model is often thought to presume that the “source” must be encoded in some language, which is then translated by the “transmitter,” but this is not necessarily the case. The will, raw emotions, or sense impressions may form a pre-linguistic source, which would be structured only through its coming to language.

¹²⁴ Schleiermacher, Friedrich, and Andrew Bowie. *Schleiermacher: Hermeneutics and Criticism: And Other Writings*. Cambridge University Press, 1998: 232. Print. Original German: “Die Sprache ist das sinnlich und äußerlich vermittelnde zwischen dem Redenden und Hörenden.” From: Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *Kritische Gesamtausgabe Zweite Abteilung, Band 4: Vorlesungen zur Hermeneutik und Kritik*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013: 79. Print.

¹²⁵ Sapir, Edward. *Language*. Cambridge University Press, 2014: 7. Print.

This technical model tends to reduce language to a coding system, a reduction that would be appropriate in the case where it is used to transmit human languages through the use of electronic signals, but in the case of the modeling of human linguistic communication, it overlooks the fact that language does not merely help encode a pre-existing “mentalese”: language plays a crucial role in the constitution of the message itself.

Language may not be a mediator, translating a *verbum cordis*, but may rather firstly be a ground, upon which men can build according to their will and find a vessel in which to outpour it. This building ground is also a common ground where men can not only meet but also con-struct and edify together. In the narrative, Adam can at this point only communicate with his creator. Would this imply that the Deity dwells in the house like the first man does? The house of signs is like a temple, the opening of a space, built from the earth, a shelter from the skies, which by its boundaries allows the transcendent to appear. The Deity condescends to reveal itself within the temple, but it is not contained in it. The essence of communication is the sharing of a vision mediated through signs, by a con-struction: Adam can offer his vision to the Deity by forging signs as the fruit of his ex-pression. The Deity can then receive this vision, and reply accordingly. The Deity can also ex-press itself from within its own creation. It can contribute to the edification of the house of signs, and thereby attempt to make the first men share its visions.

In general, however, what difference does the house of signs make in terms of interpersonal interactions? Cannot men meet outside the house, that is, without language, only through the phenomenon? A way to better see the contribution brought by language is to look at the animals, which interact with each other but have no access to language. Ants follow chemical trails left by other ants, and birds can signal the presence of a predator with their singing. Both types of actions could be considered forms of communication, but hardly languages. Certain animals make use of rudimentary signs, the building blocks of language, but none of them but man can build signs at will, edifying a house of signs and dwelling in its midst. The creatures can stumble upon simple blocks lying on the earth but they cannot shape them or combine them into structures. They communicate, but the common ground they share with their peers is too insignificant for them to share

one of the essential aspects of language: a com-union, the sharing of a single vision, seen through the lens of the sign.

Man can also attempt to venture outside the house of signs, and meet other men, through a silence of the tongue and an eclipse of the will, but he cannot go back to being a sojourner under the clear skies. He cannot forget language: he is always brought back to the house, and his fate is to be a dweller now. Meeting other men without the use of language will require a special effort because language will become so natural to him, and it is what will make him who he is. Before the building of the house of signs, Adam could also communicate with his creator, but only like an animal does. Indeed, the rudimentary signs he used were anchored in his immediate, present experience, without the abstraction necessary to project himself in time or space, and without the ability to share his point of view, as he could not be con-scious of what he is, and this for a simple reason: he had yet to see himself, had yet to be re-presented within the house, and thus never had been in a subject-object relation with his self. This question will be further discussed in the following pages.

2.2.4.6 Language as metaphysics

We have seen that the house of signs opens up a space where something beyond the phenomenon of the earth and the skies can appear, something we called a *world*. This world goes beyond the physical and it forms a new realm: the meta-physical. This world is distinct from the rest of the universe in that it is not only driven by the Φύσις but also by the will of man, by the Τέχνη. The meta-physical therefore is inherently technical or artistic, the two meanings of Τέχνη, implying that contrary to the earth, whose essence is in physical growth, the essence of the world is in construction, in building. But what does the world build?

First of all, the world re-presents the universe. It not only gathers it within the house of signs but also organizes it and transforms it into an ever-changing, flexible structure. The Φύσις itself is a continuous whole, without “parts,” “elements” or even “things.” Heidegger rightly argued that “the jug remains a vessel whether we represent it in our mind or not,”¹²⁶ but the jug is

¹²⁶ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper-

not “natural.” It rather is the fruit of man’s hands, the product of his world. As told by the Chinese wise man Laozi: 無名天地之始有名萬物之母, “nameless is the beginning of the earth and the sky; Names are the source (lit. “Mother”) of the myriad of ‘things.’¹²⁷” Prior to the opening of a world, the Φύσις “contains” no stars, no earth, no skies, and no creatures. It forms a single organic-like unity, growing and changing constantly but nonetheless remaining one. The “things” are the product of the world, of the Τέχνη, and the world represents the Φύσις as an aggregate of things, thereby artificially breaking its unity, chipping it into small chunks following the inspiration of a world-builder. As Durkheim tells us:

From the point of view of this world, we see everything materially — as something outside us. We even turn ourselves and other people into objects, into mere “pieces of the world”. In as far as we see ourselves and others in this way, we are obliged, as are all “things”, to fit into and function within rigid, worldly — and, on their own level, valid — systems and structures.¹²⁸

In the case of the narrative, this world-building is initiated by the Deity, which names the first things: the day, the night, and Adam himself. Men then continue this endeavor, representing the universe by transforming its continuous unity into a series of discontinuous signs, forming a structure, a building that is called language, and opening up a world.

A discontinuous representation of a continuous universe implies the choice of breaking points that will form boundaries, thereby marking the birth of “things.” Things arise through differentiation, which necessitates such delimitations. Concepts, which are the meta-physical equivalent of things, are very similar to them:

Collins, 2001: 165. Print. (The thing).

¹²⁷ TBA. 阿部吉雄。《新釈漢文大系〈7〉老子 莊子上卷》。東京：明治書院，1966: 11。(道德經 1)。

¹²⁸ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971: 24. Print; Original German: “Denn hier sehen wir alles im *sachlichen Aspekt*. Wir machen alles zum «Gegenstand» und so auch uns selbst wie den anderen zu einem «Stück Welt». Sofern wir uns so sehen, müssen wir uns wie alle «Dinge» in feststehende Systeme objektiv gültiger Erkenntnis-, Wert- und Lebensordnungen einfügen und in ihnen funktionieren.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Der Alltag als Übung: vom Weg zur Verwandlung*. Bern: Hans Huber, 1962: 23. Print.

without language, Adam could still see the hues of a rainbow, but he would not see colors as such. Without the house of signs, there are no colors, no red nor blue, but only a continuum of indeterminate, changing hues. The building of the house and the opening of the world nonetheless change that by transforming this continuum into a series of concepts, a limited series of signs that we name “colors.” The world functions in the same manner, not only concerning all the sensible universe, but also concerning itself, as the world can represent itself as a series of signs. Seeing this, a question of primordial importance must then be asked: how do these boundaries appear?

The boundaries marking the schematization of the universe constitute the essence of metaphysics. Language is metaphysics in the sense that it decomposes the oneness of the universe into a structured assembly of discontinuous signs. This structure, this architecture of the house of signs, is firstly determined according to the will of the builder, within the limits imposed by his body and his environment. Subsequently, it also profoundly affects him in his experience of the universe, as he then sees it through the lens of the meta-physical structure that he contributed to build. The view that man has of the universe through metaphysics is what will here be called his world-view. This world-view is the product of man’s world, of his metaphysics. It views the universe from a certain angle, influenced by his world and its discontinuous nature, something that inevitably induces a certain level of simplification, and even a distortion.

However, if man sees the universe through language, does this imply that language limits what he can see? This question can be related to an ongoing debate in linguistics and the philosophy of language: the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis,¹²⁹ which is often separated into two hypotheses. The so-called strong hypothesis states that language limits man’s thoughts, while the weak one argues that it only influences them. Transposed into the meta-narrative, this would imply, in the first case, that the architecture of the house

¹²⁹ Although now commonly attributed to Sapir and Whorf, this hypothesis, also known as “linguistic relativity,” was already mentioned by Wilhelm von Humboldt. One of the “classic” readings introducing linguistic relativity is the following monograph: Whorf, Benjamin Lee. *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012. Print.

would limit what could be seen of the universe, or that it would merely influence it.

The strong hypothesis can easily be refuted, as the architecture of the house of signs is not rigidly fixed. Even though man can inherit it, and therefore may have had no part in its construction, he nonetheless possesses the power to transform it, to reshape it according to his will. This power nonetheless does not come unbridled, as man is still affected by environmental constraints. Man can indeed transform the house, and even overhaul its architecture completely, but he would need a very strong incentive in order to do so. The meta-physical structure of his language can be changed, but he first has to realize that changes can bring improvements: a clearer view of the universe or a more efficient house. As in any structure, the house puts its weight on load-bearing walls or pillars, meaning that certain meta-physical elements are so central to the structure of the house that any replacement or transformation of these load-bearing elements would demand a considerable force, and put the house at risk of crumbling, as numerous other elements rest upon them. This may validate the weak hypothesis, as even though man is free to find the means to transcend his metaphysics, the centrality of certain of its elements imply that the meta-physical structure of the house, either built by himself or inherited, exercises a strong influence on his life and worldview. This is particularly true due to the fact that man has to continue to dwell in the house while he modifies it. He cannot step outside of it. He cannot forget his language and build another from scratch, as the house itself is what provides him with the capacity to build. Language is the foundation of his world, and to reshape this foundation on which he stands is thus a perilous enterprise. As it will be seen in the next chapters, the meta-narrative nonetheless presents us a safer way to perform such meta-physical transformations.

The nature of metaphysics and its relationship with the house of signs have been briefly discussed, but the statement of the fact that metaphysics constitutes the architecture of this house still demands further clarifications. The first step toward such a clarification can be found in the work of the father of modern linguistics: Ferdinand de Saussure. He is probably the first to have argued that the meaning of signs is essentially differential, or, in the words of Merleau-Ponty, that:

What we have learned from Saussure is that, taken singly, signs do not signify anything, and that each one of them does not so much express a meaning as mark a divergence of meaning between itself and other signs . . . language is made of differences without terms; or more exactly . . . the terms of language are engendered only by the differences which appear among them. This is a difficult idea, because common sense tells us that if term A and term B do not have any meaning at all, it is hard to see how there could be a difference of meaning between them; one would have to know the language in order to learn it.¹³⁰

This conception of the sign as purely differential is now widely accepted among linguists and philosophers alike, but it nonetheless occults certain aspects of language. The meaning of signs is indeed more often than not defined by differences with other signs, but to imply that an isolated sign would be meaningless may be an exaggeration. Meaning arises from differentiation, from contrast, but it does not necessarily imply the necessity of a multiplicity of signs, as a single sign can be contrasted with its absence. For example, a group of animals could have access to a single isolated sign-block, signifying the presence of a predator in their vicinity. In this case, a rudimentary communication involving only one sign can appear, through a contrast between the sign and its absence, an absence that could hardly be considered a sign in itself. This being said, human languages, involving a multiplicity of signs and a capacity to generate or transform them, do indeed tend to structure themselves according to different types of relationships between signs: opposition, similarity, dependency, subsumption etc. Such structuration concerns both sides of the sign: signifiers are

¹³⁰ Translation from: Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Signs*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964: 39. Print; Original French: "Ce que nous avons appris dans Saussure, c'est que les signes un à un ne signifient rien, que chacun d'eux exprime moins un sens qu'il ne marque un écart de sens entre lui-même et les autres. Comme on peut en dire autant de ceux-ci, la langue est faite de différences sans termes, ou plus exactement les termes en elle ne sont engendrés que par les différences qui apparaissent entre eux. Idée difficile, car le bon sens répond que si le terme A et le terme B n'avaient pas du tout de sens, on ne voit pas comment il y aurait contraste de sens entre eux, et si vraiment la communication allait du tout de la langue parlée au tout de la langue entendue, il faudrait savoir la langue pour l'apprendre..." From: Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Signes*. Paris: Gallimard, 1960: 49. Print.

linked together according to the aforementioned relationships, and so are signifieds. Their respective pools can be seen as containing different grids of associations, each grid showing one type of relationship. The ensemble formed by all these networks of associations is the architecture of the house of signs, the meta-physical structure that holds language together.

Signs thus indeed possess a certain meaning, even when found “in the open,” not being part of a building. With the house, something new nonetheless emerges, something that is more than a mere concatenation of signs. If we find a small black wooden pawn on the floor, we know what the pawn is and what it represents. Even on its own, the piece has a certain meaning, like the chessboard, and all the other pieces, but it is only when they are all brought together that the chess game can emerge. When they are part of the game, each piece gets associated not only with other pieces, but with the board, and more importantly with the game which is structured by a set of rules. The rules of the language-game emerging from the house of signs are its meta-physical structure. These rules can be modified, but such a modification can threaten the existence of the game that rests on it. Man can make the rules of the game but his position, not as a spectator but rather as a player, implies that he is as much played by the game as he plays it. Language is both his master and his slave. The house of being is the seat of different games, one of which is the representation of the universe. This raises the question of the purpose of the game: why is man bound to see the universe, the Φύσις and himself, through the lens of a meta-physical architecture?

Metaphysics should not be seen as a perturbation that blurs man’s vision of the universe but rather as something that lets man see it according to his unique position: between creatures and creator. His vision is indirect and mediated, but it is thanks to this metaphysics that he can see anything at all. Man is not a passive element of the Φύσις like the animals, but neither is he outside of it like the Deity is, having an objective view and a control of it. Man’s nature is tied to the Τέχνη. He has the power to grasp and create, but with an important limitation, tied to the nature of the dwelling that gives him this power: he can only see the discontinuous. Man’s mind cannot perceive the continuous, and he thus cannot perceive the Φύσις without mediation. He needs to reduce the infinite complexity of the universe into a discontinuous,

simpler representation so that its nature can be revealed to him. As Plato wrote, language is what allows to discern, to perceive the nature of things through separation, like a weaver's loom.¹³¹ Language and its meta-physical structure offer man a filter so that he would not be blinded by a complete unveiling. This filter naturally diminishes the intensity of the light, but it is thanks to it that man can see anything at all. Other creatures, which are sojourners on the earth rather than dwellers of a house of signs, are blinded by this light, bathed in it, but they nonetheless remain ignorant of its existence. Moreover, this meta-physical filter also allows him to see himself, and his dwelling, thereby giving man a glimpse of his own nature, through reflection. Thus, far from being a hindrance to man's vision of the universe, the meta-physical nature of language is precisely what makes him see parts of its nature.

The six sections concerning the essence of language have been aimed at providing an overview of some of the main aspects of the traditional, technical study of language, developing a meta-discourse that can be brought back to the earth as a meta-narrative. This overview intended to show that what emerges through the onomastic covenant is indeed the "language" that is the subject of our linguistic and philosophical tradition, and yet that it also differs from it, as it will be argued here that one needs to think poetically and to experience language as such in order to see its true nature: language is a vehicle guiding us toward the manifestation of our essential being. Before examining the potential unconcealment resulting from this emergence another of its consequences must nonetheless be uncovered: the birth of man's *ego*, the revelation of the first command and its transgression, whose repercussions are as important in the meta-narrative as they are in the narrative.

2.2.5 The house of being as a mirror: the birth of the *ego*

As Adam encounters the animals and builds the house of signs with their representations, he also arrays these representations accord-

¹³¹ "Ὄνομα ἄρα διδασκαλικόν τί ἐστὶν ὄργανον καὶ διακριτικὸν τῆς οὐσίας ὥσπερ κερκὶς ὑφάσματος." (Cratylus 388b, emphasis added), from: Henderson, Jeffrey. "PLATO, Cratylus." *Loeb Classical Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Jan. 2017.

ing to a structure that imitates the universe as he sees it. Having acquired this capacity to represent all that is presented in front of him, the first man will inevitably come to see that *he* also can be represented in the house of signs. On an earthly level, the hands in front of him and his reflection in the water of the four rivers of Eden show him that his body is very similar to many of the creatures to whom he bestowed names. On a worldly level, this implies that man can see himself, his own image, within the walls of the house of being. Seeing himself as part of the earth, man will naturally represent himself with a distinct sign-block, which will become part of the house and have a particular place in its architecture. Both man himself and his representation are now in the world, and man can for the first time enter into an object-subject relation with himself, see himself as a “thing” both on earth and in the world.

Adam’s self-representation is a major event for mankind in the meta-narrative, as it marks the beginning of man’s self-consciousness, the beginning of the *ego*. It marks the birth of man as a true “human being,” and the beginning of his being, which arises as the consequence of the fact that man dwells in the house of being. Self-representation is the ultimate test of the robustness of the house, but the crack it induces, far from causing the house to crumble, is a necessary step for its completion. Rüdiger Safranski, in his biography of Heidegger, well describes the necessity of a crack for the becoming of the *ego*:

The ego-consciousness is already a breach. Perception and experience do not begin with the ego; the ego comes in only when the experience receives a crack. We lose direct contact with the situation; some gap opens up. Or to use another picture: we view the objects through a pane of glass, and we see only ourselves when the pane of glass is no longer completely transparent, but reflects.¹³²

¹³² Safranski, Rüdiger. *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999: 101. Print; Original German: “Das Ich-Bewußt- sein ist bereits eine Brechung. Wahrnehmen und Erleben fangen nicht mit dem Ich an; mit dem Ich fängt es erst an, wenn das Erleben einen Sprung bekommt. Ich verliere die unmittelbare Föhlung mit der Situation; da klappt etwas auf. Oder um es mit einem anderen Bild zu sagen: Ich sehe durch eine Glasscheibe auf die Gegenstände; mich selbst sehe ich erst,

The self-representation cracks the house of signs and makes it not only a window toward the universe, through the capacity to represent distant signifieds, but also a mirror in which man can see his own reflection. The process of representation of the “representer” marks the appearance of the first strange-loop of the meta-narrative, as reflections are infinitely reflected, meaning that representations of representations are always possible. Thus, Adam not only can see himself, but he can also see himself seeing himself and all the possible meta-representations of himself, in a Droste effect induced by the house of signs.

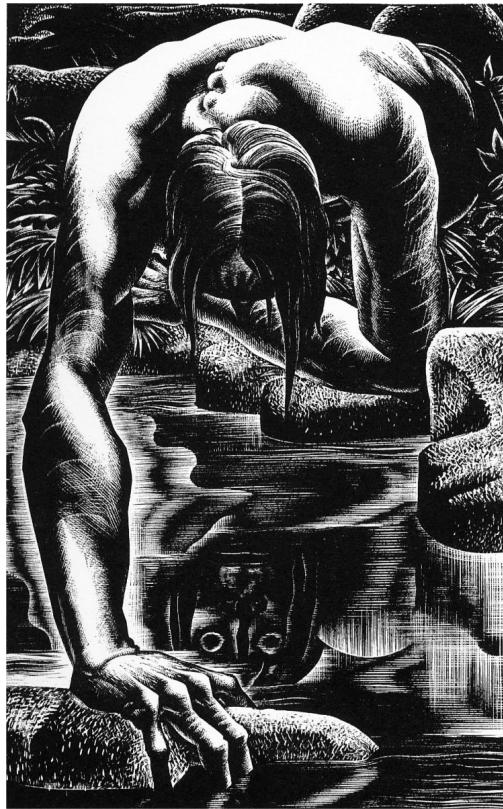


Fig. 8 *The ego*. The eyes are the mirror of the soul, and it is only when this mirror is itself clearly seen that man

wenn diese Scheibe nicht mehr vollkommen durchsichtig ist, sondern reflektiert.” From: Safranski, Rüdiger. *Ein Meister aus Deutschland: Heidegger und seine Zeit*. München: Carl Hanser Verlag GmbH & Co, 1994: 121. Print.

may finally begin to reflect on his own nature, holding his own image in his hands, within his house of being.

This gift is nonetheless not shared equally among all creatures. All creatures indeed sooner or later encounter other beings similar to themselves, and they may even perceive their own image in a reflection or see their body, without gaining an awareness of themselves. With the exception of the Serpent and the angels, which are more than mere animals, it seems that only mankind has been given this sight of himself.¹³³ Before dwelling in the house of signs, man was similar to them, but thanks to the incredible power given to him by language, Adam can not only represent himself, that is, see himself as an object present before his own eyes, within the house, but he can also ponder the relations between the representation of himself and all the other representations: those of the creatures, the earth, and the rest of the creation. The house of signs gives him the capability to see far beyond what his eyes can perceive, the ability to gather the universe and to represent it as a set of signs. By representing and looking at the infinite series of meta-representations of himself, the task given to him becomes twofold: he not only must use his position as a dweller of the house to gain a view of the universe through its representation into a collection of “things” in relation with each other, but he also, and perhaps even foremost, has the task of finding his own place within the universe.

The birth of the *ego* ushers a new era for Adam and mankind: the transition from man as a being among other creatures to man as a human being, that is, someone who has the potential to become an “ontological being,” which “is a being that does not simply occur among other beings. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that in its being this being is concerned about its very being.”¹³⁴ Through language, man thus not only has the potential to care about his own being but also to raise the question of

¹³³ Another exception can be found in Balaam’s donkey (See Num 22:21–39), but in this case the animal may be seen as a mere vessel used for a divine revelation rather than an example of a non-human ζῷον λόγον ἔχον.

¹³⁴ Heidegger, Martin, Joan Stambaugh, and Dennis J. Schmidt. *Being and Time*. SUNY Press, 2010: 10. Print. Original German: “Das Dasein ist ein Seiendes, das nicht nur unter anderem Seienden vorkommt. Es ist vielmehr dadurch ontisch ausgezeichnet, daß es diesem Seienden in seinem Sein *um* dieses Sein selbst geht.” From: GA 2: 16.

being itself, what Heidegger called the truth or essence of being. The event of self-consciousness radically transforms the house in which man dwells. From now on, it is not only a place giving him a capacity to represent the universe, it is also, and perhaps foremost, the place that allows him to be human. The house is no longer a mere “house of signs”: it becomes, following Heidegger’s appellation, the “house of being.”¹³⁵

The house of being is the space where man’s being is unconcealed to himself through the *ego*, the self-consciousness that arises from the representation of himself by a sign, which in technical language is called the first personal pronoun (I, ego, je, ich, 私 or 我 or any other). To bring into words, by naming and *poiesis*, is what reveals beings in the world: “Naming for the first time a being, language thereby for the first time brings the being to the word and to manifestation,”¹³⁶ but as with all unconcealments, the light of the thing that appears (as *Erscheinen*) also conceals other things by casting a shadow. In particular, the power of the *ego* is so strong and enticing that it can cause man to become blind to the distinction between his representation and himself, between the sign and the referent. Man could mistake his representation of the universe in the house of signs for the universe itself, and thereby have an illusory sense of control over this universe as he manipulates his representations. Such a man could be blind to the difference between representation and actuality due to the lack of ground of his world, which is cut off from the earth.

The *ego* is a unique gift given to man, one that gives him a privileged position within the creation. This gift can nonetheless blind him just as it can give him sight. It can give man a false impression of subjectivity, and lead him to believe that he has an objective view of the physical universe and his meta-physical world. If this would come to pass, man would forget that he is thrown into a universe; that he is part of a Φύσις, and is not master of his facticity, nor master of himself. This danger posed by the confusion between sign and referent will be discussed again, as it will reappear in the development of the meta-narrative. This *lethe* is nonetheless just one of many others affecting the men of

¹³⁵ GA 9: 313.

¹³⁶ TBA. Original German: “Indem die Sprache erstmals das Seiende nennt, bringt solches Nennen das Seiende erst zum Wort und zum Erscheinen.” From: GA 5: 61.

the biblical universe: at this point, man is also blind to his world and to language itself, as he has yet to detach himself from it in order to perceive its nature. His worldview is for now still very naïve and his house very humble. His capacity to form new signs, combined with his self-consciousness, will nonetheless form the two pillars upon which man's progress toward the manifestation of his essential being will rest. The blossoming of man's essential being, however, will not occur through a random trial and error process, but rather be guided, by the Deity itself, through a path carved *in language*, pointing out which way to go and which to avoid. This guide is the divine law.

2.2.6 The first law

Following the giving of the names by Adam and the aforementioned transformations it induced on his life and his being, the search for a partner to Adam among the creatures, which constituted the stated purpose of the “parade” of the animals, ends without a suitable match. The Deity then forms the first woman, Eve, who comes to share with him the garden of Eden and man's worldly dwelling: the house of being and the world it opened up. As with the rest of the book of Genesis, the narrative does not recount the events in great detail, forcing us to attempt to infer what was left unsaid. The arrival of Eve in the world is one of these “quiet events”: now that she dwells in the house of being, she also shares the yoke of the first divine law, the prohibition to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It was noticed earlier that Adam received this first law before dwelling in the house of signs, before being thrown into the world, and it was thus inferred that the first command might have been given to him on an “earthly,” phenomenological level, in a manner similar to the way an animal can be trained to refrain from entering a forbidden place by the use of a terrifying sound for example, as said in the following verse by Hölderlin: “In the thunderstorm speaks the God.”¹³⁷ If it is indeed the case, Adam would have to bring this earthly command to the world in order to instruct Eve concerning the Law. He would have to build it into the house, as a doorpost to be seen by

¹³⁷ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin's Hymns “Germania” and “The Rhine.”* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014: 58. Print. Original German: “Im Gewitter spricht der Gott.” From GA 39: 62.

all its dwellers.

Therefore, although the command was expressed with words by the Deity, the becoming of the Law into the world of men appears to occur through Adam. The first man must take the earth, the physical awe he feels in front of the forbidden tree, and shape it, carve it, work it into a sign that would properly represent the physical impression left by the command on his body and his mind. This work takes the earth and brings it to the world. It is meant to be a mimesis of the command, a realistic representation, grounded in the earth, rather than a mere idea in the clouds. This building work can be described in classical, technical terms, as an “audible utterance of inner emotions, as human activity, as a representation by image and by concept,”¹³⁸ but it is also more than this: the sign as work is what unconceals the earth in the world, what makes it *be*. Thus, even though Adam respected the prohibition while he was a sojourner on the naked earth, the command is unconcealed to him only when he brings it to his dwelling; when he forms it into a block in the midst of his world.

Within the house of being, the sign-blocks representing the first command thus are Adam’s “work of art,” the product of his technical skills, of his mastery of the art of fashioning the components of his world. This work occupies a special place in the house of being: although man-made, it represents something divine, something sacred, distinct from the rest of man’s dwelling. The Law forms a sacred space within the house, an altar representing a divine “thing,” which establishes a link between man’s abode and the Deity. Its light also shines upon the walls of the house, revealing its purpose: it separates the lawful from the unlawful, what is good from what is evil, by cleaving the world in two through an illumination. For now, this altar is brittle and evanescent, made of straw rather than granite, as the absence of any means to durably preserve language intact as it passes through time, without relying on man’s memory, implies that it must be directly supported by man, or otherwise immediately crumble and fall into oblivion.

¹³⁸ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2001: 191. Print. (Language). Original German: “. . . lautliche Äußerung innerer Gemütsbewegungen, als menschliche Tätigkeit, als ein bildhaftbegriffliches Darstellen. . .” From: GA 12: 13.

The sign first unconceals the command to Adam, but by bringing it to the world, it also makes it appear (as *erscheinen*, to shine) to the new dweller, to Eve, who did not experience the physical awe impressed on the first man. Now, Eve can share the burden of the Law, as she sees the work of Adam's hands that *re-presents* the divine command. With the advent of the first woman, mankind appears, as a community of men, and the world opened by language becomes more than the particular worldview of an individual: it becomes a space shared by a community, in which men can collaborate for the edification of their own dwelling. Each one of the dwellers of the house of being can build signs and affect its architecture, either grounding it further into the earth or elevating it toward the clouds. Language empowers men as a group, to form a society if they compete for the shaping of the world according to their own clouded worldview, or to form a community when they strive toward the same goal, which would, according to their nature, be the grounding of the world further into the earth. The gift of language, however, is a two-edged sword, as Heidegger remarks: "Only where there is language does world prevail. Only where there is world — that is, where there is language — is there supreme danger: altogether *the* danger, which is the threatening of being as such by non-being."¹³⁹ Language is the house of being, allowing its dwellers to *be*, as ontological beings. This unconcealment of being itself nonetheless also comes with, and because of the possibility of not-being. This contrasting element, which is usually called "death," is essential for the unconcealment of being, and it is no wonder that it is precisely the heart of the first law, and the subject of the first dialogue contained in the narrative. The first law contains the essence of language, as it induces the emergence of both being and not-being, of obedience, which is a source of life, and of transgression, which is a source of death.

Language is thus a two-edged sword. It is first a great power, one that makes man stand out from the other creatures. As Heidegger remarks:

By virtue of language, the human being is the witness

¹³⁹ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine."* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014: 58. Print; Original German: "Nur wo Sprache, da waltet Welt. Nur wo Welt, d. h. wo Sprache, da ist höchste Gefahr, die Gefahr überhaupt, d. h. die Bedrohung des Seins als solchen durch das Nichtsein," from GA 39: 62.

of beyng. He testifies on its behalf, stands up to it, and falls victim to it. Where there is no language, as in the case of animals and plants, there, despite all life, is no manifestness of beyng and, for this reason, there is no non-being either and none of the emptiness belonging to the Nothing. Plant and animal stand on this side of such things; here there reign only blind pursuit and opaque flight.¹⁴⁰

It is also a great danger, as man is aware that his most prized possession, his being, is now conditioned to his obedience to the Law, revealed to him through language:

Language is dangerous not only because it brings the human being into a particular danger, but is *what is most dangerous* — the danger of dangers — because it first creates, and alone keeps open, the possibility of a threatening of beyng in general. Because the human being *is* in language, he creates this danger and brings the destruction that lurks within it.¹⁴¹

Therefore, this danger inherent to language and to being is not the threat of a malevolent and power-hungry god; not a block put on the path of man to make him stumble, but rather a prerequisite allowing his being. Thus seen, the ground of the first law is uncovered: by presenting the possibility of transgression and death, the Deity unconceals holiness and life to mankind. This event echoes with the first verses of the narrative, when the Deity separates the elements, the earth, the skies, the water, and the land. Here, the event takes place in the world, and the separation is the one between being and non-being, life and death, obedience and transgression. Following this genesis of the world, the meta-narrative continues, and a new dweller joins men in their abode,

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.^t: 58; Original German: “Kraft der Sprache ist der Mensch der Zeuge des Seyns. Er steht für dieses ein, hält ihm stand und fällt ihm anheim. Wo keine Sprache, wie bei Tier und Pflanze, da ist trotz allen Lebens keine Offenbarkeit des Seyns und daher auch kein Nichtsein und keine Leere des Nichts. Pflanze und Tier stehen diesseits von all dem, hier herrscht nur blinde Sucht und dumpfe Flucht.” From: Ibid.^o: 62.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.^t: 58; Original German: “Die Sprache ist nicht nur gefährlich, weil sie den Menschen in eine Gefahr bringt, sondern das Gefährlichste, die Gefahr der Gefahren, weil sie die Möglichkeit der Seynsbedrohung überhaupt erst schafft und allein offenhält. Weil der Mensch in der Sprache ist, deshalb schafft er diese Gefahr und bringt die in ihr lauernde Zerstörung.” From: Ibid.^o: 58.

one who will initiate the birth of a reflection on the Law, of a “hermeneutics,” as an attempt to find its intended meaning. This reflection will also set the stage for an event that will shake man’s relation with both the earth and the world, the narrative and the meta-narrative: the fall.

2.2.7 The first dialogue, the first temptation: the grounding of the altar

*Viel hat erfahren der Mensch.
Der Himmlischen viele genannt,
Seit ein Gespräch wir sind
Und hören können voneinander.*

Much have humans
experienced.
Named many of the
heavenly,
Since we are a dialogue
And can hear from one
another.

— Hölderlin¹⁴²

Men are a dialogue, the poet tells us, and the first occasion for man to show his nature as dialogue takes place with the appearance of “the serpent” (הַנָּחָשׁ [hannāḥāšš]), who addresses himself to Eve. This name should not confuse us: Christian tradition almost unanimously sees this serpent not as an earthly creature similar to the ones that were named by Adam but rather as a fallen member of the heavenly host, who is also commonly known as Satan (“the adversary” in Hebrew). His heavenly nature explains his ability to enter the house of being, which is inaccessible to the earthly creatures with the sole exception of mankind. Satan thus attempts to influence the edification of the house so as to leave an imprint in the world of men, by asking the first women a simple question: “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree of the garden’?”¹⁴³ The question, which is itself a manifestation of language, a meta-physical sign, is now one of the sign-blocks composing the house of being. It is made to pose as a representation of the command, but

¹⁴² Ibid.^t: 62. Ibid.^o: 68.

¹⁴³ Gen 3:3.

it in fact constitutes a deliberate misrepresentation: it does not faithfully imitate but rather deceives through a minute although precise deformation. It is a falsification of the altar fashioned by Adam, whose shining light delimited the good from the evil of the world, as an overlay on the walls of the house. Eve is shown this new altar, posing as the Deity's command, and is asked to acknowledge its divine origin.

What is, however, Eve's relation to the command? If Adam indeed brings it to language, this implies that its representation is inevitably marked by the touch of its author and by his worldview. The altar that was shown to Eve by Adam was fashioned by the first man, and it necessarily bears his mark. By asking the aforementioned question, Satan is asking Eve to explain, to describe the representation made by Adam, his "work of art," and thereby to make her own secondary representation, her mimesis of the work that she saw. This re-production must be done from memory, as its oral nature implies that she only perceived it for an instant. The first woman thus replies, giving her own representation of the command: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'¹⁴⁴ As we can see, the command as described by Eve differs from the one uttered by the Deity: the tree is not named and the prohibition is extended to the touching of the tree. In the house of being, this means that Eve's altar significantly differs from Adam's. The fallen one then replies by uttering the first temptation of mankind in the narrative: "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."¹⁴⁵ This reply argues that both representations of the command, both altars, are untrue, that is, that they are not grounded in the earth but rather on clouds. According to the serpent, this lack of ground does not only affect minor details of the Law, but also one of its key elements: death as a consequence of an eventual transgression of the Law. In place of the sacred altar delimiting good and evil, Satan presents her a new possibility: to be like the Deity. This constitutes a new vision of her world, one in which she would be at the center, without distinction between the sacred and the profane, the accessible and what is out

¹⁴⁴ Gen 3:4.

¹⁴⁵ Gen 3:5.

of reach. The woman is now facing a conundrum: two different visions of the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit, visions that contradict one another.

With this first dialogue, the interpretation of the divine law begins. The first woman is now made to realize that her view of the first command is dependent on Adam and Satan's representations of it, and that she must now determine which one is the most reliable, which one is true, that is, grounded in the earth; and which one is only a meta-physical, cloudy deception. Falsehood, the lack of ground of a part of the house of being, is uncovered through the appearance of contradictions. Truth, what is grounded in the earth, outside the realm of the world and its competing interpretations or worldviews, on the other hand, is unconcealed through correlations, relying on the coherence, unity, and absolute nature of the Φύσις. Falsehood is the contrasting element that makes truth possible, and this fact may show the purpose of the temptation and may explain why the Deity allows it to occur. By being given an un-true representation, Eve is thereby also given sight of what truth is. This process nonetheless does not only describe the purpose of the temptation but perhaps also the purpose of the command itself. The first law, taking the form of a prohibition, reveals to man what his realm is. Only by fixing a limit to his dominion can man realize its existence and its extent. The command thus seems to be originally meant as a boundary that opens up possibilities, in agreement with Heidegger's view of the Greek sense of this word: "the boundary is that from which something begins its presenting."¹⁴⁶ Satan presents the boundary as a prison limiting mankind and denying him access to the knowledge of good and evil. Eve is now given a task: to discern truth from falsehood. But she has yet to be prepared for this, and hardly has the means to see whether the interpretation given to her by the Serpent is grounded or if it only rests on the thin air of the clouds.

It was seen in the previous pages that the Φύσις is one, and that it is man who breaks it into "things" and "relations" in order to make it somewhat intelligible, as a simplified vision of it.

¹⁴⁶ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2001: 152. Print. (Building Dwelling Thinking); Original German: "Die Grenze ist nicht das, wobei etwas aufhört, sondern, wie die Griechen es erkannten, die Grenze ist jenes, von woher etwas sein Wesen beginnt." From: GA 7: 156.

Man therefore only “thinks” the Φύσις through its representation offered by the house of being. It is because he dwells in the house of being that he can see the Φύσις, as a set of “things,” and as a result of this, the truth of the command cannot be established according to the common philosophical definition of this word, that is, as *adaequatio rei et intellectus*,¹⁴⁷ as correspondence between representation and “reality.” Without or outside the house of being, man is just an ontic creature, who can feel and experience the earthly dimension of the Φύσις, but to whom the Φύσις remains unintelligible, as this would require the power of language. This unintelligibility nonetheless does not imply that truth and falsehood could not be discerned by man, as he can use his *logos* to search for the ground of the representation under scrutiny, by following the thread of relations and “things” on which it depends, the other signs to which it is connected. What is true, because it is grounded in the earth, in the reality of the Φύσις, cannot be truly contradicted by something that is also grounded in the same element. The coherence of the Φύσις provides a basis for a true world, a world that is grounded in the earth. Falsehood, on the other hand, can always be found incoherent, contradictory, because it lacks a secure basis, and thus, the building of a “false” world is similar to trying to tie knots on the clouds, a vain enterprise. Therefore, the way for Eve to resolve the conundrum caused by the two contradictory representations of the command would be to follow the threads of relations they contain so as to unconceal their ground or the lack thereof. The first woman, however, does not choose this path.

Faced with her first de-cision, Eve reacts hastily: “when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate” (Gen 3:6¹⁴⁸). Rather than trying to find the earthly ground of the worldly lie of the deceiver, Eve performs only a very superficial reflection. She attempts to locate the worldly “thing” that is the fruit in the wider world opened within the house of being, putting it in relation with others “things” in her dwelling.

¹⁴⁷ Heidegger, Martin. *Pathmarks*. Cambridge University Press, 1998: 138. Print. (Quoted from S^t Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, Q.16, A.2).

¹⁴⁸ “וַתֵּרָא הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל וְכִי תֹאנֶה הִוא לְעֵינִים וְנִחְמָד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׁכִּיל” (Gen 3:6).
:וַתֵּקַח מִפִּרְיוֹ וַתֹּאכַל וַתֵּתֶן גַּם לְאִישָׁהּ עִמָּה וַיֹּאכַל:

Focused on similarities of appearance, Eve nonetheless only brings the sign representing the fruit close to others, signs that only share a resemblance in the appearance of their signified, the appearance of what these signs are pointing out on the earth. The forbidden fruit resembles the other fruits, which are “good for food,” and she thus concludes that the altar and the separation between good and evil that it projects on the house must be baseless. The first woman does not look for the ground of what may be the most important part of the serpent’s claim: that transgressing the command will not result in her death.

S^t Thomas Aquinas tells us that gifts come to those who possess virtues and that the gift of knowledge coveted by Eve comes with the virtue of faith.¹⁴⁹ If Eve had this virtue while she was tempted to eat the forbidden fruit, she would not have restricted her reflection to the most superficial aspects of Satan’s representation. By doubting of the benevolence of the Deity, believing that she is being deceived and deprived of knowledge, Eve loses sight of all ground, the ground on which she and everything around her stand: she refuses to see that all that she has and all that she is, including her being itself, comes from the one who gave this command, and she rather lets herself be enticed by the dream of the clouds: a potential greatness, a departure from the earth and an ascent towards the heavens so as to take the Deity’s place as the guardian of knowledge. The sacred space delimited by the altar’s light is violated, and the altar itself is discarded as falsehood, as a form of deceit by the Deity.

The first man nonetheless also lets himself be enticed by Eve’s dream and the serpent’s cunning.¹⁵⁰ But the couple’s ascent into the clouds is soon brought to an end. The groundless world that they started to build, and which they hoped would sustain their ascent, will now collapse. They will be pushed back on the earth, finally forced to realize their mistake: “then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (Gen 3:7¹⁵¹). The

¹⁴⁹ Aquinas, Thomas. *The Summa Theologica*. London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1917: 111. Print. (Summa Theologica II.II).

¹⁵⁰ It should be noted that one cannot exclude the possibility that Adam ate the fruit not to willingly transgress the Law, but perhaps because realizing what would befall Eve, he decided to eat it to share her fate and her burden.

¹⁵¹ “וַתִּפְקַחְנָה עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי עֲרֻמָּם הֵם וַיִּתְּפְרוּ עֲלֵה תְּאֵנָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם” (Gen 3:7).

act of eating the fruit occurs on the earth, but it backlashes in the world: their eyes are opened, a new portion of the world is uncovered, one that reveals new aspects of human nature. In their own reflection on the walls of the house of being, they can see their own shame, the true nature of their desires. Because of this transgression of the divine command, of this straying away from the path guiding their existence, the being of men will now be profoundly transformed, as they from now on will become transient creatures, passing through the world before returning to the earth: mortals.

2.2.8 On the way toward death

*Daß der Mensch, dem Ding
verdingt, die Nachbarschaft
zum Tod verbringt*

That man served the “thing,”
The neighboring to Death
did it bring.

— Martin Heidegger, *Der Sterbliche*¹⁵²

With language, man was raised above the other earthly creatures. He was given the dwelling allowing him to become conscious of his own being. With language, however, his non-being also appears. Not as a mere possibility but rather as an absolute certainty: death. Even though it is the result of an earthly action, the eating of the fruit, the act of transgression of the first Law can only be imputed to man because he dwells in the house of being and because the Law is present in it. Before language, transgression could exist but “sin is not imputed when there is no law” (Rom 5:13¹⁵³), and the Law (νόμος [nómos]) comes with the names (ὄνομα [ónoma]¹⁵⁴). The Deity executes the Law’s punishment, and thereby seals the fate of man, marking his passage from the realm of the immortals to the land of the “neighbors of death,” the mortals. Man can now clearly see the perilous nature of his dwelling and the price of its misappropriation: “As what is most dangerous, language is what

¹⁵² TBA. GA 97: 293.

¹⁵³ Original Greek: “ἁμαρτία δὲ οὐκ ἐλλογεῖται μὴ ὄντος νόμου” (Rom 5:13).

¹⁵⁴ ὄνομα [ónoma] is νόμος [nómos], and νόμος is ὄνομα.

is most double-edged and most ambiguous. It places the human being into the zone of supreme achievement, yet at the same time holds him within the realm of abyssal decline [*Verfall*].”¹⁵⁵ The downfall of man is not only poetical: he will be taken away from the garden and made to go down westward, to the lower earth, which he will have to toil for his subsistence. The blowback of the transgression is nonetheless not limited to the earthly, and man’s world will also be severely shaken by the fall.

The first tremor felt in the house of being comes from its foundation: man’s earthly environment, which profoundly changes. Eden was a place where man lacked nothing, where he did not need any effort for his sustenance, and did not suffer from the inhospitable nature of the land or the onslaught of the skies. Until then, his world did not include the notions of need, pain, cold, or hunger, as they did not exist in Eden. With the fall on the unwelcoming land, west of the garden, the house of being is now shaken by an earthquake that transforms the world that it shelters. These changes are nonetheless not necessarily negative. What the men knew in Eden remains, but a new portion of the earth is now revealed to them, something that can be seen as a progress, even though these newfound parts of the world are mostly associated with hardships.

The second tremor felt in the house of being comes with the appearance of death itself, which affects some of its fundamental aspects. Until then, man’s world was eternal, just as he was, but now, his time is counted, and his world, that is, all that he built in the house of being, is under threat of crumbling and falling into oblivion. As soon as his hands will cease to be able to support it, man’s world will crumble, unless he can pass it on as an inheritance to someone else. The strength of the house, supported by the two formerly eternal pillars, Adam and Eve, will now be diminished, as these pillars will soon waste away and be replaced by a series of temporary columns. Man’s descendance will now be loaded with the burden of sustaining the house and preserving the heritage of his forefathers. Death thus transforms the house of being from a

¹⁵⁵ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin’s Hymns “Germania” and “The Rhine.”* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014: 58. Print (emphasis added); Original German: “Als das Gefährlichste ist die Sprache das Zweischneidigste und Zweideutigste. Sie stellt den Menschen in die Zone höchsten Erringens und hält ihn zugleich im Bereich abgründigen Verfalls.” From: GA 39: 62.

rigid structure into one that is never securely standing, with parts of it crumbling with each passing generation, as men will never preserve the totality of their inheritance. Most of what will remain will only be series of vague, undecipherable marks, as poetically described by Maironis :

*Kokių kalbų, tarmių, tautų
Iš bočių lopšio, iš rytų,
Pro tavo vandenis neslinko?
Seniai nutilo jų gandai;
Jei kur išliko gal vardai,
Tai be prasmės, be savininko!*

What languages, dialects,
peoples, from the cradle of
our ancestors, from the East,
did not scroll past in front of
your waters? Their rumors
went silent a long time ago;
If somewhere perhaps their
names remain, they are
without meaning, without
owner!¹⁵⁶

The effect of death pervades every dimension of human life: earth, world, and skies, as man is the one who unites and mediates them all. Eden is in the eastern part of the earth, the land of the dawn, where the sun rises, but now man will head toward the West, the land of dusk, over which the darkness, that is, death, holds sway. The fall to the lower earth is intimately linked with the sky, which is “the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year’s seasons and their changes, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night.”¹⁵⁷ The sky is the space-time where man’s being can take place, and the dusk marks a new beginning of time for man, a time that will not be unlimited anymore, but rather be bounded by death. In the dusk, man faces the darkness that slowly approaches, seeing the light fading away to make way for the arrival of the unfamiliar, the unnerving. The dusk nevertheless also brings something: it is “not a mere sinking of the day, the

¹⁵⁶ TBA. Maironis. “Pavasario balsai.” *Lietuvių klasikinės literatūros antologija*. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.

¹⁵⁷ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2001: 147. Print; Original German: “Der Himmel ist der wölbende Sonnengang, der gestaltwechselnde Mondlauf, der wandernde Glanz der Gestirne, die Zeiten des Jahres und ihre Wende, Licht und Dämmer des Tages, Dunkel und Helle der Nacht, das Wirkliche und Unwirkliche der Wetter, Wolkenzug und blauende Tiefe des Äthers.” From: GA 7: 151.

dissolution of its brightness in the gloom of night. Dusk, anyway, does not necessarily mean the twilight of the end. The morning, too, has its twilight. The day rises in twilight. Twilight, then, is also a rising.”¹⁵⁸ Thus, the dusk brought by the transgression is a privileged moment for man, because the transition between day and night, between immortality and mortality, occurs in the twilight of life and death, when both can be seen, when the opposites reconcile each other. According to Heidegger:

The transition [der übergang] thus is not the [going] away from one and the toward the other, but rather the essential way of coming-together of the one and the other. A transition is not the going-forth but rather the abiding gathered in oneself, which unites the one and the other, and thus brings them both forth from their abiding essential ground . . . ¹⁵⁹

Man is the witness of this mutual appropriation that takes place during the twilight of life and death, but he is also fully part of this event, as it occurs within him. Through this event, man is given the chance to experience a reconciliation, which is both an appropriation of the foreign and a disappropriation¹⁶⁰ of what is his own:

Reconciliation is not a striking-down and an elimination of the strife but rather the release of the things that strive in the right of their essence. The true balance brings back the things that strive in the similarity of their essence. Balance means that all are equally brought to the resting of their essence, and carried

¹⁵⁸ Heidegger, Martin. *On the Way to Language*. New York: HarperCollins, 1982: 164. Print; Original German: “»Dämmerung« ist jedoch kein bloßes Untergehen des Tages als Verfall seiner Helle in die Finsternis. Dämmerung meint überhaupt nicht notwendig Untergang. Auch der Morgen dämmert. Mit ihm geht der Tag auf. Dämmerung ist zugleich Aufgehen.” From GA 12: 38.

¹⁵⁹ TBA. Original German: “So ist denn der übergang nicht das Weg von Einem und das Fort zum Anderen, sondern die wesentliche Art des Zueinanderkommens des Einen und des Anderen. übergang ist nicht das Vorübergehen, sondern das in sich gesammelte Bleiben, das Eines und das Andere einigt und so beide aus ihrem bleibenden Wesensgrund hervorgehen und in ihm allererst bleiben läßt.” From: GA 52: 85–86 (Andenken).

¹⁶⁰ the German word: *Enteignis*, translated as “disappropriation” in: Heidegger, Martin, Richard Rojcewicz, and Daniela Vallega-Neu. *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*. Indiana University Press, 2012. Print.

there, so that they would receive the strength from this “essential rest” to recognize the counteressence, and in this recognition for the first time find themselves whole. Finding-oneself is nonetheless never the obstinate insistence on oneself alone but rather a crossing over from what is one’s own to the foreign of the other, and a crossing back from this now familiar foreign to what is one’s own. Balance is going to and fro, it is transition [übergang].¹⁶¹

Thus seen, the event of the fall is not a mere punishment but rather a way for man to appropriate the nature of his being, through the strife of being and non-being that takes place during the twilight of life and death, the transition from the East to the West. Death weakens the support of man’s house of being but it also enlarges his world, by making the tension between life and death, being and non-being, manifest.

Severed from the tree of life, man is thus exiled from Eden and brought to the dry earth, which needs to be relentlessly toiled to bring forth fruits whose consumption will allow him to sustain his body. He leaves behind the delights of the garden, but he nonetheless brings something with him: his dwelling, language, the “fire from heaven” that makes him a human being and now also allows him to face the certainty of his death. Between the first dialogue and the fall, however, another element in man’s world was uncovered: his *logos*, his capacity to *think*, which will be a central element of the relation between language and man’s path toward the manifestation of his essential being.

¹⁶¹ TBA. Original German: “Versöhnung ist auch nicht Niederschlagen und Beseitigen des Streites, sondern Freigabe der Streitenden in das je eigene Recht ihres Wesens. Der wahre Ausgleich stellt die Streitenden in das Gleiche ihres Wesens zurück. Ausgleich bedeutet, daß jedes gleichanfänglich in die Ruhe seines Wesens gebracht und dort ausgetragen wird, damit es aus dieser Wesensruhe die Kraft empfängt, das Gegenwesen anzuerkennen und in solcher Anerkennung erst auch sich selbst ganz zu finden. Sich selbst finden ist aber niemals das eigensinnige Auf sich allein pochen, sondern Hinübergehen aus dem Eigenen zum Fremden des Anderen und Herübergehen aus diesem anerkannten Fremden ins Eigene. Ausgleich ist Hinüber und Herübergehen, ist übergang.” From: GA 52: 86.

2.2.9 The severance from the earth and the task of thinking

... *Geistlich dämmert*
Bläue über dem verhaueenen
Wald . . .

...Ghostly the twilight dusk
 Bluing above the mishewn
 forest...

— Georg Trakl¹⁶²

The emergence of the world engulfs man in a new facticity, one that both reveals and covers. The world marks the breaking of man's unity with the Φύσις. Before he dwelt in the house of being, there were no "things": only the oneness and continuity of the earthly phenomenon. Man was one with the earth and the skies, living like the other creatures, and like the plants and the rocks. He was also one with divine being. He nonetheless was in blissful ignorance, unconscious of himself, of his self, of the Φύσις, and of being itself. By being thrown into the house of being, man is severed from the earth, the experience of which now becomes mediated by the world. His unity with the Φύσις and with divine being is broken by the world's separation of their oneness into a multitude of "things." The emergence of his *ego* induces the creation of two poles that will orient his life: the unity of divine being on the one side, and himself, as something that stands out from divine being, on the other. This is well described by Dürckheim:

The undivided plenitude of the inceptual oneness of being separates, splits itself; between its two poles, a tension is created. Being manifest itself in the elements separated by this partition, which become independent without its unity disappearing completely at first. However, the more the proper individuality of the separated elements is accentuated, the more they risk of being detached from their roots, of closing themselves off and of relying on themselves, thereby losing

¹⁶² From a poem by Georg Trakl, quoted by Heidegger in: Heidegger, Martin. *On the Way to Language*. New York: HarperCollins, 1982: 164. Print; Original german from: GA 12:38.

their primordial contact with the whole of being, and therefore also losing the ground of their own existence. *Man's original destiny is to be more or less victim of this danger.* The formation of the ego, with its ego-centric will, leads to a crucial separation. The rational consciousness then uses the theoretical consciousness and practical "observations" to build man and the world. The union with being thus comes to its breaking point. Although the unity of being with the essential being is never lost, it disappears from the rational consciousness. (Emphasis added)¹⁶³

Man's unity with divine being and with the Φύσις is thus broken, but this occurs as part of man's destiny. Indeed, as without contrast nothing can be seen, man thus cannot become conscious of the nature of the Φύσις, of being, and of their oneness, if he is not separated from them, or at least appears to be. Man does not leave the Φύσις and he remains a manifestation of divine being. The emergence of his *ego* nonetheless leads him to think that he was severed from them. All may be part of the Deity's plan: "Man's destiny demands that he first loses his path, creating a consciousness that makes him think he is free and independent. Through it, he betrays the transforming character of life, and loses contact

¹⁶³ TBA. Original German: "Ungeschiedene Fülle ursprünglicher Einheit des Seins gerät in sich selbst in polare Spannung, bricht auseinander, differenziert sich, tritt in selbständig werdenden Polen aus sich heraus und in ihnen sich selbst gegenüber, ohne daß zunächst die Einheit als das übergreifende Ganze vollends verloren wäre. Je mehr aber die Seiten des Ganzen sich verselbständigen und zu etwas Eigenem werden, droht dem Ganzen Gefahr, aber auch den Gliedern, die, ihrer Lebenswurzel beraubt, versucht sind, sich in sich selbst zu verschließen, sich auf sich selbst stellend, eigenläufig zu werden und die Urverbundenheit mit dem im Ganzen lebendigen Sein und damit ihren Daseinsgrund zu verlieren. Dieser Gefahr mehr oder weniger zum Opfer zu fallen ist das Urschicksal des Menschen. Dies geschieht als Ursonderung im Augenblick der Geburt des eigenwilligen Ichs, das sich kraft seines rationalen, das heißt fixierenden Bewußtseins, darin der Mensch sich wie auch seine Welt im theoretischen Unterscheiden und praktischen „Feststellen“ bildet, auf sich selbst und aus dem Ganzen herausstellt. Dies führt schließlich zur Zerreißprobe für die Verbundenheit mit dem Sein. Dann in der Identifikation mit dem „Ich bin ich und will es *bleiben*, vom anderen *verschieden* und *gegen* ihn mich absichernd" geht dem Menschen die Einheit mit dem Sein, die er zwar in seinem Wesen niemals verliert, im Bewußtsein verloren." From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Vom doppelten Ursprung des Menschen*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag, 2009: 127. Print.

with being.”¹⁶⁴ His destiny is to lose the path so that he can find it back at a later point, toiling within the house of being, as he will have to toil the earth of his new earthly dwelling in order to sustain himself. This worldly work will be to *think*, using man’s *logos* as a plow.

The dusk of man, his exile from Eden and his march toward death, may be attributed to a deficient thinking, induced by the conjunction of a poor mastery of language and a weakness of will from Adam and Eve. Thinking is *logos*, reason arising from language, that is, man’s capacity to build a world, to establish relations between its constituting elements and to ground them in the earth. It allows the unveiling of the Φύσις to man, an unveiling that can be guided by the Deity but that also depends on man’s will. The Deity will guide man so that he will find back the path that he has lost, and so that he will become a conscious instrument of divine being. Man must nonetheless respond to this guidance and work to make sense of the clues left to guide him.

When invited to think, through Satan’s temptation, Eve indeed proceeded to do so: she established worldly relations of similarity between the appearance of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which was forbidden to her, and the other trees of the garden, such as the tree of life. Her thinking nonetheless failed to seek the ground of the two hypotheses presented to her. The flattering and the elevation of her *ego* were more important to her than the path, and she used the *logos* to justify her own egocentrism rather than seek her essential being.

Eve’s first attempt at thinking occurred in a particular setting, before the dusk of man and in the full brightness of the day, when he was an immortal creature that would never see its own death. During the day, man is bathed in light and his senses are overwhelmed by the experience of the earth. Such a time is not propitious to the task of thinking, as man’s focus is then oriented toward the everydayness of life, leaving him few opportunities to break the readiness-to-hand of the things around him, but now,

¹⁶⁴ TBA. Original German: “Es ist das Schicksal des Menschen, seinen Weg erst zu verfehlen, indem er ein Bewußtsein ausbildet, in dem er sich eine Freiheit und eine Eigenständigkeit einbildet, die den Verwandlungscharakter des Lebens verrät und ihn die Fühlung mit dem *Sein* verlieren läßt.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried. *Der Ruf nach dem Meister: Die Bedeutung geistiger Führung auf dem Weg zum Selbst*. Weilheim: O.W. Barth, 1972: 82. Print.

as the long night approaches, and as he loses his direct sight of the earth, his senses start to rest: the light is dimmed to darkness; the voices of the creatures grow silent. The darkness of the night is needed for something new to appear, as “in the daylight of our world, we do not see the stars of the world above. Only for him who, in his quest for light, can accept to see his ordinary consciousness be dimmed, do the stars of LIFE begin to shine,”¹⁶⁵ as Dürckheim tells us. With the night comes the time of the vigil, the time of thinking and of communion with the Deity. The darkness offers an easier sight of the light, as described in the Gospel according to Matthew: “the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned” (Mat 4:16¹⁶⁶). From now on, all men will live in the shadow of death, which will come for every one of them. This long night, however, will give men an opportunity to pursue the task of thinking in the house of being, something that will be both a personal experience and a collective endeavor, and something that can be initiated by any man, at any time.

Before dusk, the absence of the possibility of non-being concealed being itself, and the universe was mostly seen only in its readiness-to-hand. During the night and in the shadow of death, the universe can now appear in the world, in its presence-at-hand. This process constitutes not only the origin of thinking but also the origin of what is called, in the language of the Τέχνη, “hermeneutics.” The “science of interpretation” does not start with the advent of scriptures or writing, but rather starts when man begins to ponder the world, when he begins to observe the building-blocks of his dwelling. Therefore, in the biblical narrative, thinking starts with the first temptation and with the task of interpreting the first law. The task of thinking that is incumbent to man is nonetheless more than the construction of an ideal representation of the Φύσις and meta-φύσις themselves. Authentic thinking is not only aimed at the ‘grasping’ of the universe. It rather is a *search*, which is part of the Φύσις process itself, a search for the accomplishment of man’s destiny, the revelation of his essential being. The slow and

¹⁶⁵ TBA. Original German: “Im Tageslicht unserer Welt sehen wir die Sterne der Überwelt nicht. Nur für den, der auf der Suche nach dem Licht eine Verdunkelung seines gewöhnlichen Bewußtseins in Kauf nimmt, beginnen die Sterne des LEBENS zu leuchten.” From: Ibid.: 175.

¹⁶⁶ Original Greek: “ὁ λαὸς ὁ καθήμενος ἐν σκότει φῶς εἶδεν μέγα, καὶ τοῖς καθημένοις ἐν χώρα καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου φῶς ἀνέτειλεν αὐτοῖς” (Mat 4:16).

intricate work needed to build the surely grounded world endeavored by mankind will not be a waste of time, as it itself represents the journey of mankind, which is perhaps more important than the destination, the ultimate result of the search. The journey is foremost a way for man to find himself, more than a way to find what lies beyond his world:

What is the hardest to find is like what is one's own and what is the closest, what must be searched the longest, and as long as it is searched, it is never lost. Any hasty and rushed search is no real search, but rather a disorganized roaming from one to another. To the search belongs the constant pause of reflection [Be-sinnung]. Reflection is like the breathing of the shy one in front of the awaited wonder. The real search is a constant hesitation. Not the hesitation of one who is merely at loss and undecided, but rather the hesitation of one who has abided for a long time, who has looked back and forth, while he searched and was abiding in the transition [übergang]. The finding and appropriation of what is one's own is the same as the hesitating transition.¹⁶⁷

There is no search for truth where there is no doubt. Certainty is an enemy of inquiry, and therefore an enemy of thinking and truth. Eve doubted of the veracity of Adam's rendition of the divine command, but she did not find the Serpent's intentions dubious, and because of this, mankind fell. It may nonetheless have been man's destiny, and his fall may just be the starting point of the adventure of his redemption. This opportunity to find back the path he lost will be given to any of Adam's descendants, at any point in time, but it will require that he take a stand, seizing the help given by the Deity with a resoluteness to manifest his essential

¹⁶⁷ TBA. Original German: "Was am schwersten zu finden ist wie das Eigene und Nächste, das muß am längsten gesucht werden, und solange es gesucht wird, ist es nie verloren. Alles überhastete und gehetzte Suchen ist kein Suchen, sondern nur ein wirres Irren vom Einen zum Anderen. Zum Suchen gehört das ständige Innehalten der Be-sinnung. Besinnung ist wie das Atemholen der Scheu vor dem erwarteten' Wunder. Das echte Suchen ist ein ständiges Zögern. Nicht das Zögern des nur Ratlosen und Unentschiedenen, aber das Zögern des lange Verweilenden, der vor- und zurückblickt, weil er sucht und im übergang verweilt. Die Findung und Aneignung des Eigenen ist eins mit dem zögernden Übergang." From: GA 52:123-124.

being.

2.2.10 Unconcealment: being in the universe

月も月花もむかしのはななから
みるものものになりけるかな

Moon unchanged,
Unchanged flowers.
I, however, am now
The thingness of
things seen.

— Bunan¹⁶⁸

As Dürckheim said: “Man’s destiny demands that he first loses his path.”¹⁶⁹ In the creation narrative, man suffers the loss of two different paths. Firstly, his unity with divine being is severed when he is thrown into the house of being and the world it opens. Secondly, man is also now separated from the earth, as he will now experience it through the mediation of the world. With the emergence of the world, man is given sight of the Φύσις, and a power to exert his dominion over both the earth and the creatures, through the Τέχνη, but he is now unable to experience the Φύσις directly, without the mediation of the world.

The edification of the house of signs gives Adam a unique role among the creatures, and it gives him the capability to share the Deity’s vision of its creation. By initiating the building of the house, the Deity has taken man from the earth and placed him in a vehicle that will carry him on the path toward his destiny, which is the dis-discovery of his essential being. Language is this vehicle that will become a means by which man will be guided by the Deity toward different stat-ions, with each one of them offering him an

¹⁶⁸ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Grace of Zen: Zen Texts for Meditation*. London: Search Press, 1977: 11. Print; Original Japanese from: 無難, 公田連太郎。《至道無難禪師集》。東京: 春秋社, 1956: 27。(即心記)

¹⁶⁹ TBA. Original German: “Es ist das Schicksal des Menschen, seinen Weg erst zu verfehlen . . .” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried. *Der Ruf nach dem Meister: Die Bedeutung geistiger Führung auf dem Weg zum Selbst*. Weilheim: O.W. Barth, 1972: 82. Print.

opportunity to unconceal his own facticity, his own nature, and to nurture his relation to his essential being. This carrying away is an *ek-stasis*, a stepping out of one's facticity and the entering into a new one. Later in the meta-narrative, the vehicle itself will be carried toward different stat-ions, but for now, the first *ek-stasis* occurs with man leaving the naked earth so as to step into the vehicle, thereby entering the world.

This *ek-stasis* does not necessarily constitute in itself a progress for man. It does not automatically make him advance on the path. It rather only clears this path. Being in the world in itself does not open man up to his essential being, but it does offer him a chance to do so. Man's place within the Φύσις, granted by the Deity, is unique. With great honor, however, also comes great responsibility, and man will thus be presented with a series of choices. He will have to react to what has been given to him and seize the opportunities that he is offered, and not stand still on the path.

Man thus finds himself at a crossroad. He has lived the beginning of his life in the facticity of the pure phenomenon, on the earth and beneath the skies, engulfed in their readiness-to-hand. The emergence of the world has now transformed him. He had no choice when he was thrown into the world, but he is now given a choice concerning his relationship with the earth, with his past facticity. As a mediator between earth and world, he will also have to choose what kind of relationship between these two entities will he build. The success of the *ek-stasis* will entirely depend on the nature of this choice. It can lead to an unconcealment and a greater consciousness of man's essential being, but it can also lead to a dead-end if man is not ready to take his destiny into his own hands.

This choice is not a one-time event, nor an event only concerning the first man. It will be made by all the descendants of Adam, who will all be taken from the earth and thrown into a world in their infancy, but this choice can be changed at every instant of their life. The choice will always affect the way they view the universe, and their role in it, but no matter what decision they make, they will have the opportunity to change, for the better or worse. The two different choices will now be examined, the first of which is the one of forgetfulness: the leap.

2.2.10.1 The leap between earth and world

The first choice is the simplest, and perhaps the most “natural,” that is, the one that will occur if no act of will counteracts it. This choice, however, will be the one through which there is no reward.

When seeing a new environment, man will desire to plunge into it, so as to feel the joy of the novelty, the freshness of a new experience. He leaves his past behind to leap into the unknown, into what he perceives to be his future. This all too natural and yet naïve feeling is well described in the following verse by Hölderlin:

*Leicht ist mir die Brust und
schnell sind meine Sehnen, ha!
und die Zukunft reizt mich, wie
eine klare Wassertiefe uns reizt,
hinein zu springen und das
übermütige Blut im frischen
Bade zu kühlen.*

My breast is light, and
swift my sinews, ha! and
the future tempts me, as
clear deep water tempts
us to leap into it and cool
our exuberant blood in
that freshening bath.¹⁷⁰

By leaving the earth and entering into the world, man is, voluntarily or not, severing himself from the earth, and therefore also from his past. He enjoys his new facticity, this world that empowers him and allows him to represent all creation, giving him a somewhat illusory sense of control over it. Shutting himself inside the house of signs does not seem to disconcert such a man, and once his blood is cooled down by the freshness of the new world that ex-cites his senses and his mind, he slowly slips back into the slumber of everydayness, becoming progressively blind to his new facticity, as he throws himself in the readiness-to-hand of his world. His world becomes an extension of his body, a mere tool that he can use to interact with his environment. Man enters the vehicle and forgets about the universe around it. This situation, this *stand* taken by man toward the *ek-stasis* event, has far-reaching implications, which will affect every aspect of his existence.

¹⁷⁰ Original German from: Hölderlin, Friedrich. *Hyperion*. N.p.: Tredition, 2012: 121. Print; English translation from: Hölderlin, Friedrich, and Eric L Santner. *Hyperion and Selected Poems*. New York: Continuum, 1990: 86. Print.

By leaping into the world, shutting himself inside the house of signs and thereby closing the passage between the earth and the world, man not only loses sight of the earth but also of the skies, which are now concealed by the house, leaving them only to be seen through the prism of the signs forming the house. This implies that after his leap, such a man would only see the universe as a representation in language, severing himself from the experience of the earth. He cuts himself off from the continuum forming the Φύσις so as to take refuge in the world, where it can seem that he is in control. He gradually loses sight of the earth completely, leading himself to believe that the representations of the earth that he builds with signs are equivalent to the reality of the Φύσις.

This loss of sight of the earth, its concealment by the world, implies that the world built by man within the house of signs will be drifting away from the earth, as its earthly ground becomes less and less visible, losing all influence upon the world. Is this connection between earth and world really necessary, one may ask. It was argued earlier that the main purpose of language is to represent the universe in order to make it intelligible to man, by simplifying its incomprehensible continuity into a humanly perceivable set of discontinuous things. If this is true, the world would thus lose its purpose by being severed from the earth. It would only form a set of representations that would progressively drift away from being a representation of the universe to being a pure fantasy, a pure product of man's imagination.

The house of signs is inherently earthly, built from the earth: it is composed of sound waves in the air, gestures by the hands of man, or carvings in the rock. Nevertheless, even though the house will always stand on the earthly ground, the closing off of the house from the outside environment, the earth and the skies, implies that interactions between the two may stop. New signs will be made, and the house will continue to evolve and grow, but these new signs will not be directly grounded in the earth. They will rather only be shaped from other signs. In such a case, the meta-physical structure of the house will grow larger and larger, but it will rest on an increasingly smaller earthly basis. Instead of resting on its largest side, the world then becomes like an inverted pyramid, putting all its weight on its tip, in a precarious equilibrium that can be threatened by any movement around it. Representations then become the basis for further representations, in a process that

takes man farther and farther away from the ground, up onto a purely meta-physical realm,¹⁷¹ in Aristophanes' clouds!¹⁷² With this choice, man does not progress on the path toward his destiny, and the *ek-stasis* is thus vain. His horizon has only been subjected to a shift: he has gained sight of a world, but has lost contact with the naked earth. He has forgotten his past facticity, which was anchored in the phenomenological experience of the earth, and was thrown into a world which is the product of his hands and will, that is, of the Τέχνη. The vehicle blinds him to what lies beyond it, even though it is precisely what it is meant to reveal. Man is nonetheless also given another choice.

2.2.10.2 The bridging of earth and world

Man is not condemned to leap between earth and world and to forget his previous life. He is given a second choice concerning his relation to his present and past facticities. Leaping toward the new induces a severance from the old, but man can attempt to bridge the two, maintaining a connection and a balance between them so as to benefit from their complementarity. How can such a bridging be achieved?

¹⁷¹ It can be remarked that even though Heidegger often seems to condemn metaphysics as a whole, the criticism of the so-called "Western metaphysics" remarkably developed by the German philosopher can be related to such a process of disconnection between world and earth. The problem of metaphysics is not its existence, which is a necessary in order for man to be an "animal rationale," but rather its degenerescence, when it becomes its own ground and loses its connection to the earth, to the phenomenon. The whole enterprise of phenomenology may be seen in this light, as a way to avoid this form of metaphysical degenerescence that blinds the mind and leads man to get lost in the clouds; leads him to shift his look away from the creation, from the Φύσις so as to focus his attention on his own constructions instead, thereby forgetting his place as a creature and losing sight of his creator.

¹⁷² The famous play "The clouds" by Aristophanes is focused on the satire of the "merchants of knowledge" of Ancient Greece, the Sophists. In it, Socrates is described as a Sophist, who spends his time "in the clouds," pondering metaphysical questions that are deemed ridiculous by the common people. This play is said to have played a role in the execution of Socrates, and it is mentioned in Plato's Apology, recounting his trial (See Plato, John M. Cooper, and D. S. Hutchinson. *Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997: 20. Print; Apology 19c). The play itself can be found in: Aristophanes, and Marie C. Marianetti. *The Clouds: An Annotated Translation*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1997. Print.

The existence of a bridge would imply a capacity to walk back and forth between the past environment (the naked earth) and the new (the world opened by the house of signs). After being thrown into the world, man can nonetheless hardly leave this house: he cannot forget language and revive the direct experience of the oneness of the Φύσις; he cannot feel the naked earth and see the naked skies, because he can now only see them as an assembly of “things,” that is, through the lens of his world. He may venture close to the threshold between the two, but such an experience of the earth would be far from what he had known before, in his past facticity. For Adam, the earth did not disappear: he cannot directly experience it anymore, but he still can view it and interact with it through the mediation of the world.¹⁷³ The earth can remain partially visible through the house of signs, through its building blocks that offer a representation of even its most remote parts, but this view of the earth is always distorted by the architecture of the house, which acts as a filtering lens, reducing the continuous earth into a meta-physical structure. This contrast, this tension between the stat-ions can nevertheless allow man to view the earth’s presence-at-hand and to become conscious of the fact that the world is only a representation of the Φύσις, rather than the Φύσις itself.

At this point, man experiences the house of being in its readiness-to-hand, which is the basic attitude of the dweller: language is seen as a tool, used to represent and manipulate, helping him exercise his dominion over the creation. This attitude is necessary in order for man to live his everyday life, but it also blinds him to the true nature of the things he manipulates. He sees their use but not their “thingness,” that is, their nature, the way they are related to the whole of the Φύσις. To see the thingness of things is to see them as present-at-hand, to put aside their use and to get a glimpse of their essence, and their origin. Such a presence-at-hand of things can naturally manifest itself only within the house of signs, because of the need to quantize the Φύσις in order to make it intelligible to man. Thus, even the present-at-hand view of the

¹⁷³ In the case of Adam, he may also revive his experience of the earth through recollection, as he experienced it first hand before being thrown into the world, but this would hardly be possible for any of his descendants, as even though all are born on the naked earth, without a world, most men will enter a house of being in their infancy, with no recollection of their life on the earth.

earth that man has *in* language is not to see the earth “as it really is,” because presence-at-hand still always concerns “things,” which are mere meta-physical representations of the $\Phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$. Presence-at-hand is nevertheless the most convenient way for man to attempt at peering through the thingness of the things so as to reach and to touch the earth, not as a representation but rather in its continuous and unified nature as $\Phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$. More importantly, this can constitute an entryway to the path of man’s destiny. In the words of Dürckheim, “the way we human beings follow is the way of developing consciousness.”¹⁷⁴ A consciousness of the earth and of the fact that it is distinct from the worldly representations of it, is the first step toward a consciousness of man’s own nature, of his own presence-at-hand. On the earth, man was in what Dürckheim calls a “pre-mental” stage of consciousness. The emergence of the world marks the advent of another:

The second step is the emergence and development of the objective, dualistic consciousness, which lands us simultaneously in the antitheses of ego/world and ego/true nature. To start with, however, the ego/world tension is the only one we feel. Suppressing true nature and our roots in Being, we concentrate entirely on the world, on succeeding in it, surviving in it, and doing what it asks of us, and the gap separating us from Being widens.¹⁷⁵

The bridging can counteract this effect of the world on man. The bridge is not only a passageway linking earth and world. It is also a way for man to tether the world to the earth, preventing its degeneracy, which would make it wander “in the clouds,” as in the case discussed concerning the leap. The bridge grounds the world

¹⁷⁴ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen and Us*. Boston: Dutton, 1987: 110. Print; Original German: “Der Weg des Menschen ist der Weg der Entwicklung seines Bewußtseins.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen und wir*. Frankfurt: FISCHER Digital, 2016: 113. Print.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*^t: 111; Original German: “Die Entwicklung und Ausbildung des gegenständlichen und gegensätzlichen Bewußtseins. Diese Entwicklung treibt den Menschen in den zweifachen Gegensatz von Ich — Welt und Ich — Wesen hinein. Der Mensch nimmt aber zunächst nur die Spannung zwischen Ich und Welt wahr. Er verdrängt sein Wesen und seine Verankerung im Sein und liefert sich ganz der Auseinandersetzung mit der Welt aus, um sie zu meistern, in ihr zu bestehen und in ihr zu dienen. Dies treibt ihn immer mehr in die Entfremdung vom Sein.” From: *Ibid.*^o: 114.

into the earth, and the world is meant to help man unconceal his essential being. This role of the world can only be fulfilled if it is grounded, in the same source as man's being itself, the *Φύσις*. The bridging is nonetheless more than the tethering of the world to the earth. In order for the *ek-stasis* to fully succeed, the bridge has to become the seat of a tension between the two sides. This important event is described by Heidegger in the following terms:

The opposition of world and earth is a striving. But we would surely all too easily falsify its nature if we were to confound striving with discord and dispute, and thus see it only as disorder and destruction. In essential striving, rather, the opponents raise each other into the self-assertion of their natures. Self-assertion of nature, however, is never a rigid insistence upon some contingent state, but surrender to the concealed originality of the source of one's own being. In the struggle, each opponent carries the other beyond itself. Thus the striving becomes ever more intense as striving, and more authentically what it is. The more the struggle over-does itself on its own part, the more inflexibly do the opponents let themselves go into the intimacy of simple belonging to one another. The earth cannot dispense with the Open of the world if it itself is to appear as earth in the liberated surge of its self-seclusion. The world, again, cannot soar out of the earth's sight if, as the governing breadth and path of all essential destiny, it is to ground itself on a resolute foundation¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2001: 47–48. Print; Original German: "Das Gegeneinander von Welt und Erde ist ein Streit. Allzuleicht verfälschen wir freilich das Wesen des Streites, indem wir sein Wesen mit der Zwietracht und dem Hader zusammenwerfen und ihn deshalb nur als Störung und Zerstörung kennen. Im wesenhaften Streit jedoch heben die Streitenden, das eine je das andere, in die Selbstbehauptung ihres Wesens. Die Selbstbehauptung des Wesens ist jedoch niemals das Sich-versteifen auf einen zufälligen Zustand, sondern das Sichauf-geben in die verborgene Ursprünglichkeit der Herkunft des eigenen Seins. Im Streit trägt jedes das andere über sich hinaus. Der Streit wird so immer strittiger und eigentlicher, was er ist. Je härter der Streit sich selbständig übertreibt, tun so unnachgiebiger lassen sich die Streitenden in die Innigkeit des einfachen Sichgehörens los. Die Erde kann das Offene der Welt nicht missen, soll sie selbst als Erde im befreiten Andrang ihres Sichverschließens erscheinen. Die Welt wiederum kann der Erde nicht entschweben, soll sie als waltende Weite und Bahn alles wesentlichen Geschickes sich auf ein Entschiedenens gründen."

Being the seat of the **strife of earth and world**, the bridge-builder begins to tread the path toward his destiny. This strife incites him to continue to build the world through thinking, without neglecting the need to ground this world. It also, and perhaps foremost, invites him to do his best to get back closer to the earth. He cannot escape the world, but the most grounded parts of it, that is, the foundation stones of the house of being, can help him occupy the surface separating world and earth, where the two are hardly distinguishable. This space, this horizon, is where man may experience the earth as such, without much hindrance caused by the metaphysics of his world. It is only through the world that man can become conscious of his destiny calling him to return to the experience of the earth, something that Dürckheim also recognized concerning the *ego*:

The whole point of the painful tension between world-ego and Essential Being is that by this process the secret meaning hidden in this tension becomes clear. In a word, it is to lead man from the wrong way to the right way — not to bring him safe home to some kind of ‘eternal resting-place’. . .¹⁷⁷

Man’s “world-ego” is part of the larger world, and the words of the therapist can also be applied to the world as a whole. The *ek-stasis* allows man to begin a reflection concerning his essential being, and his relationship with it, by first leading him away from it so that it can become more apparent. Man is himself both a “thing” of the world through his *ego*, and part of the earth, of the oneness of the Φύσις. The *ek-stasis* begins to unconceal the path of man’s destiny: he is taken to the world for a precise purpose, which is to incite him to appropriate his own nature, and then, when the time will have come, to invite him to come back to the oneness of the Φύσις from which he originates, without nonetheless denying his separation from it. This separation between world and earth, man’s *ego* and divine being, are both means used by the Deity to

From: GA 5: 35–36.

¹⁷⁷ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971: 82–83. Print; Original German: “Der Sinn der Auflösung der leidvollen Spannung zwischen Welt-Ich und Wesen ist die Einlösung ihres Sinnes: den Menschen von seinem Irrweg auf den rechten Weg zu ziehen, ihn also nicht heimgen und eingehen zu lassen in «ewige Ruhe». . .” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Der Alltag als Übung: vom Weg zur Verwandlung*. Bern: Hans Huber, 1962: 102. Print.

make him travel back to the earth, to the unity of the Φύσις, not to be as he was before the *ek-stasis*, but rather to come back to it with open eyes, becoming a living and conscious manifestation of divine being, rather than a mere cog in a machine, without will nor awareness. This path is only beginning, as most men will need further guidance, other *ek-stases* and other stat-ions in order to fulfill their destiny.

Death itself, which comes soon after the first stat-ion for Adam and Eve, can also be seen as part of this movement. In the words of Dürckheim: “When the one who, in death, only saw a dead-end recognizes, at the first signs of its approach, the voice of LIFE bringing him back, through death, to his fatherland, this can represent a ‘great experience.’”¹⁷⁸ This “great experience” is the meaning of the path, which is to be found on the way, rather than at its end. Our journey through the (hi)story of the house of being, however, only begins.

¹⁷⁸ TBA. Original German: “Wenn der Mensch, der im Tod erst nur die Sackgasse sieht, in der sein Leben unweigerlich mündet, dann in den ersten Zeichen des Todes die Stimme des LEBENS erkennt, in das der Tod ihn heimholen will, dann kann ihm dies zur »Großen Erfahrung« werden.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried. *Der Ruf nach dem Meister: Die Bedeutung geistiger Führung auf dem Weg zum Selbst*. Weilheim: O.W. Barth, 1972: 180. Print.

Chapter 3

The Babel episode

The first *ek-stasis* of the meta-narrative may be enough for individual men to discover their essential being and to become its living manifestation. The end of the life of Adam and Eve is not recounted in the narrative, but they may have been able to fully take advantage of the opportunity offered to them by their world and their new mortal life. Looking at the hints that can be found in the rest of the book, it nonetheless seems clear that few among their descendants will do so. More guidance will be needed, and the Deity will generously provide it. The first stat-ion, which was the entry into the vehicle itself, that is, the entry into language, will only constitute the beginning of man's journey toward the fulfillment of his destiny.

In the narrative, a few generations following the fall, mankind as a whole will be transformed through a direct intervention of the Deity. Because of the arrogance of the descendance of Adam and Eve, manifested by the building of the "tower of Babel" that was supposed to reach the heavens, their tongues will be confused. From a single group, they will now form a wide array of peoples, languages and cultures, scattered across the surface of the earth. In the meta-narrative, this implies that language will be brought to a new stage, a new stat-ion. The transition of the vehicle to the new stat-ion will induce a second *ek-stasis*, giving man a new chance to open himself up to his essential being. Mankind will now be composed of 72 peoples, dwelling in 72 houses of being. The house will thus be superseded by a **village of being**.

Contrary to the previous *ek-stasis*, here man will not be thrown into a new environment: the emergence will occur at a distance, out of his reach. Man will witness the other houses in the village, but he will not be able to enter and dwell in them, that is, not be able to access other languages. The facing of this inability will nonetheless precisely be the aim of this *ek-stasis*. It will reveal the nature of man's own worldly facticity. It will show him the nature of his dwelling, of the vehicle meant to reveal his essential being, through an encounter with the unintelligible.



Fig. 9 *The village*. A village is a place where men can live close to one another, without relinquishing their independence and the privacy of their dwelling. Neighbors see each other, but each remains within his house. The village's life follows the flow of nature, growing or shrinking with seasons, without any man overseeing its structure.

No matter what choice men have made concerning the previous stat-ion, whether to leap or bridge it with the earth, each one of them will still be given the opportunity to make a second choice, one concerning this new stat-ion, and so at any given point in time following the events of Babel. The journey traveled by the vehicle is meaningless if no tension between the stat-ions is maintained. It would then become an aimless wandering in the world. If, however, man can perceive that the end of the path is not its goal and that this goal is rather to be found in the bonds weaved between the stat-ions, he can then seize the helping hand of the

Deity, offered through the *ek-stases*, and see how this journey will lead him to the dis-discovery of his essential being.

3.1 The narrative of the Babel episode

Ten generations after Adam, Noah and his family are the only men who survived the flood that destroyed most of life on earth. His three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, had numerous descendants, who are all now living together, as a single people.¹ The book of Genesis then tells us that “now the whole earth had one language and few words.”² This phrasing may not only indicate that the sons of Noah were speaking a single language but also that this language had singular properties. It was perhaps a language whose simplicity reflected a certain linguistic and social efficiency, a language in which few words were needed to communicate and be understood. It perhaps used the same words that Adam gave to the animals in the garden. The narrative nonetheless does not offer us clear answers regarding this issue.

This single language has attracted the same sort of controversies as those concerning the quest for the Adamic language. Among the more credible theories, the one of the medieval Syrian scholar Bar-Hebraeus can be mentioned: he argues in his commentary on the aforementioned verse that this language would have to be (Syriac) Aramaic, as later in the narrative, the patriarch Abraham would come from the Chaldean city of Ur, located in the

¹ Genesis 10 mentions the existence of different groups speaking different languages, but the commentators, among which is S^t Augustine, are almost unanimous to interpret this genealogy as one that is extended into the post-confusion period, as indicated by the mention of Babel as ruled by Nimrod.

² “וַיְהִי כָל-הָאָרֶץ שָׂפָה אֶחָת וּדְבָרִים אֶחָדִים:” (Gen 11:1). This translation (RSV-CE) is as close as it could be to the original Hebrew, but the cryptic nature of the expression “few words” (דְּבָרִים אֶחָדִים) has incited translators, ancient and modern, to translate it differently. The Greek Septuagint has, literally, “one lip and one voice” (ἑνὸς καὶ φωνῆς μία), while the Syriac Peshitta renders it as “one language and one speech” (ܠܒܢܐ ܥܕ ܡܚܒܠܐ ܥܕ). Both nonetheless ignore the fact that the second part is in a plural form. The ESV translates it as “one language and the same words,” but the other occurrences of the word אֶחָדִים all seem to indicate that it would mean “few words” (This word only occurs three times in this plural form: in Gen 27:44, Gen 29:20 and Dan 11:20).

The narrative then continues: in the days of Peleg son of Eber, a prophetic name meaning division, “for in his days the earth was divided,”⁴ a mighty hunter named Nimrod (“rebellion” in Hebrew) reigned over the unified people. Then, the circumstances leading to the construction of the tower of Babel are briefly described:

St^t John Chrysostom already sees in the migration to the West a sign of men's unquenchable ambition, as they cannot keep within boundaries and always long for more than what they have.⁶ This being true or not, their intentions become clear as they settle in the plain of Shinar and discover a new construction technique: the use of clay bricks and bitumen. Before this, it can be supposed that they all lived in tents, caves, or rudimentary stone buildings, using new materials created by God, with little transformation. The appearance of bricks and bitumen marks a shift away from this situation. The new material is identifiable as the fruit of man's hands, and the "natural" fields and plains that are clearly identifiable as creations of God are slowly replaced by the creations of man. The arrogance of the people is first seen in the deeds

⁶ Louth, Andrew, ed. *Genesis 1–11 (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2016: 167. Print.

committed by its members. It is nonetheless soon followed with words: “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens.” The terms are clear: the city and the tower, which would be the world’s greatest human structure, are not built to honor their creator but rather for the glory of its builders. S^t Augustine thinks that the people of Babel built the gigantic tower in order to protect themselves from an eventual second flood,⁷ thereby demonstrating their lack of faith in God who promised in his covenant with Noah that never again would the earth be submerged as a punishment.⁸ It also shows that they were determined to live a life of wickedness, or they would not have feared to be destroyed by God, as God does not destroy the righteous with the wicked, otherwise the family of their ancestor Noah would not have been saved. S^t John Paul II thus compared the builders of Babel with Adam and Eve at the time of the fall:

In both there is an exclusion of God through direct opposition to one of his commandments, through an act of rivalry, through the mistaken pretension of being ‘like him’ In the story of Babel the exclusion of God is presented not so much under the aspect of opposition to him as of forgetfulness and indifference toward him, as if God were of no relevance in the sphere of man’s joint projects.⁹

Besides S^t Augustine’s interpretation of the tower seeing it as a protection from a second flood, the height of the tower has also been more literally interpreted as a way for the men of Babel to climb unto the heavens, in order to conquer them. This interpretation has been compared by Philo of Alexandria to the Greek myth of Otos and Ephialtes, who planned to pile up several mountains in order to reach Mount Olympus and take goddesses as their wives.¹⁰ The Venerable Bede also mentions the possibility of a flood as an explanation for the height of the tower, but he also rightly points

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ At the time of the construction of the tower of Babel, the covenant with Noah may also simply have been forgotten.

⁹ John Paul II. *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Reconciliatio et Paenitentia of Pope John Paul II to the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful on Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church Today*. N.p.: Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference, 1984. N. pag. PDF.

¹⁰ Philo. *The Works of Philo (Volume 2 of 4)*. Overland Park: Digireads.com Publishing, 2011: 5. Print.

out the mysterious nature of the builder's own justification:¹¹ "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." The tower would perhaps serve as a beacon, showing the way home to the people if they were to be scattered across the earth, either by force or by their own will? There is no way to know the true intentions of the builders, but from their own mouths, it would seem that pride was one of the leading forces leading to the construction: the tower was built for themselves, but also to "make a name" for themselves. What does it mean?

As was said before, the sin of the Babelites started with deeds and continues with words. To make a name is not a bad deed in itself, but it becomes a sin when they make it *for themselves*. We have seen in our examination of the beginning of Genesis that the bestowing of a name is not a trivial matter. It is a godly act by which men become associated with God in the creation and evolution of language. When God asked Adam to name the animals, he also gave him dominion over them. The two things are tightly intertwined: language, and naming in particular, is perhaps the strongest sign marking a domination, a subjugation by the one who bestows the name. Adam named the things upon which he had dominion, but he was himself named by God, as were the earth, the sky, and the celestial bodies. Later in the narrative, when Nebuchadnezzar took Daniel and his companions as captives to Babylon, one of the first things he ordered was the changing of their names, thereby indicating that they were owned by Babylon.¹² Thus, by trying to "make a name" for themselves, they may not only have sought glory in the eyes of their descendance, as the idiomatic use of the expression implies, but also sought to be masters over themselves, thereby disregarding God. The futility of this enterprise is expressed in the words of the Psalmist: "Their graves are their homes for ever, their dwelling places to all generations, though they named lands their own"¹³ (Psa 49:11). The parallel with the fall continues here: by making names for themselves, they attempted to be like God, not stealing a forbidden fruit but rather the right to rule themselves. By asserting this independence from God, they are in fact denying him, explaining

¹¹ Bede. *On Genesis*. Liverpool University Press, 2008: 229. Print.

¹² Dan 1:7.

¹³ "קָרְבָּם בְּתִימוֹ לְעוֹלָם מִשְׁכְּנָתָם לְדֹר וָדֹר קָרְאוּ בְּשֵׁמוֹתָם עַל־אֲדָמוֹת:" (Psa 49:12 HND).

why the creator would be offended by their actions.

All this shows that fame, or even the pursuit of fame, is not necessarily wrong. God himself promised it to Abraham: “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great”¹⁴ (Gen 12:2). But the Babelites did not seek fame through their good deeds or their faith, but rather through their rebellion against God, so as to usurp his authority and reign over all creation. God nonetheless showed his foreknowledge of their actions, and therefore their ruler was prophetically named Nimrod (נִמְרוֹד), which means “rebellion.” Following these events, God considers the work of people of Babel:

And the LORD came down¹⁵ to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.”¹⁶

As the Psalmist said: “The Lord looked down upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and that did seek God.”¹⁷ The creator’s diagnosis imputes the evil of their deeds to the fact that the people was united as a single group, “using” a single language. This ethnic and linguistic unity gave the Babelites a sentiment of omnipotence, as their endeavors were not impeded by any ethnic conflicts or resentments, nor by any difficulties in communicating with one another. This absence of confrontations had advantages, but it also had a severe drawback: the absence of limits to their ambition. This unbounded aspiration nevertheless

¹⁴ “וְאַעֲשֶׂה לְנוֹי גָּדוֹל וְאַבְרָכָה וְאַנְדְּלָה שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְּרָכָה:” (Gen 12:2).

¹⁵ S^t Justin Martyr argues that the expression “the LORD came down” does not refer to the Father but rather to the Son. The use of the Tetragrammaton in the original text would nevertheless tend to disprove this. As with many other anthropomorphic expressions used in the scriptures, this one would seem to be purely metaphorical, only designating God’s attention to the matter. See Roberts, Alexander, and Sir James Donaldson. *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Justin Martyr and Athenagoras*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1870: 260. Print.

¹⁶ “וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה לִרְאוֹת אֶת-הָעִיר וְאֶת-הַמִּגְדָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ בְנֵי הָאָדָם: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה: הֵן עַם אֶחָד וּשְׂפָה אַחַת לְכָלֵּם וְזֶה הַחֵלֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת וְעַתָּה לֹא-יִבְצֹר מֵהֶם כָּל אֲשֶׁר יִזְמֹנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת:” (Gen 11:5–6).

¹⁷ “יְהוָה מִשְׁמַיִם הִשְׁקִיף עַל-בְּנֵי-אָדָם לִרְאוֹת הֲיֵשׁ מִשְׁכִּיל דְּרַשׁ אֶת-אֱלֹהִים:” (Psa 14:2).

Therefore, having denied God, and being puffed up by their unity, they first consider themselves supreme rulers of the earth and even of the heavens, thanks to their tower “that touched the stars and thought they might be able to climb the skies with it,”¹⁸ in the words of Commodian. Naturally, the creator would not remain passive after considering their deeds, and perhaps among the people was there someone exhorting him to show them the evil of their ways, in the same manner that David would later use: “Put them in fear, O LORD! Let the nations know that they are but men!”¹⁹ Following this, the reaction to their offense soon comes, but not as a flood, as they might have expected. On account of their unity they sinned, by this they shall be taught:

'Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.²⁰

¹⁹ (Psa 9:20). "שִׁיתָה יְהוָה מוֹרָה לָהֶם יִדְעוּ גּוֹיִם אֲנוֹשׁ הִמָּה סֵלָה:"

²⁰ הָבָה נִרְדָּה וְנִבְלָה שָׁם שְׁפָתָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אִישׁ שְׁפַת רֵעֵהוּ: וַיִּפֹּץ יְהוָה אֹתָם מִשָּׁם עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ וַיַּחְדְּלוּ לִבְנֹת הָעִיר: עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ בָּבֶל כִּי־שָׁם (Gen 11:7-9); “בָּלַל יְהוָה שְׁפַת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ וּמִשָּׁם הִפִּיצָם יְהוָה עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ: The first question raised by this passage concerns the use of the plural form “let us go down.” Augustine mentions the two main possibilities (See Louth, Andrew, ed. *Genesis 1–11 (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2016: 168. Print.): it is an exhortation either directed to the other persons of the trinity, the Son and the Holy Spirit, or to angels who would perform the task of the confusion commanded by the Father. Novatian nonetheless uses a verse of Deuteronomy to argue that neither the Father nor angels went down to confuse the languages (See *ibid.*:168): “When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he fixed the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God” (Deu 32:8). The Masoretic text and the Septu-

The details concerning the exact process by which the universal language is “confused” are left out of the narrative. Its immediate purpose is nonetheless known: the creation of different groups that would not be able to communicate verbally. A language is perhaps the most defining trait of an ethnic identity, even more than any physical characteristics: without the ability to communicate, a sense of community is nearly impossible. A shared language can bring men of any appearance closer through linguistic communication, but according to S^t Augustine, language is also an instrument of domination. Thus, since men did not understand God’s command, God would then cause them to be misunderstood when they will give orders to each other.²¹ Through this, their conspiracies will be disbanded, and each man will be forced to associate only with those with whom he can speak.

The separation is nonetheless not only linguistic, but also spatial: “the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth.” S^t Jerome interprets this in term of a dilution of evil: “the more sinners there are at one time, the worse they are.”²² He nevertheless concludes that “the dispersion was of true benefit even to those who were dispersed,”²³ as they would have a greater chance for redemption. This echoes with all the praises for the pastoral-nomadic lifestyle that follow in the rest of the book of Genesis, combined with the despising of the city-life. Abraham, in particular, would represent the archetype of the noble man leaving the large city to live a life of wandering in the desert with his clan, away from the temptations of the city, the choice of his brother Lot to live in Sodom providing a famous counter-example.²⁴

The etymology of the name of the city is then explained:

agint manuscripts here differ, the first having “the sons of Israel” (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) and the second “angels of God” (ἁγγέλων θεοῦ). However, a Qumran fragment (4QDeutj) now supports the view that the original text agreed with the Septuagint. Even though Novatian quoted this verse with an opposite intention, a separation of the people according to the number of angels would tend to favor their involvement in the matter! This controversy needed to be pointed out to assure a global comprehension of the text, but its resolution is not a crucial element of the episode of the confusion of tongues.

²¹ Augustine. *The City of God*. Overland Park: Digireads.com Publishing, 2004: 395. Print.

²² Louth, Andrew, ed. *Genesis 1–11 (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2016: 169. Print.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Gen 19.

“therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth.” The etymological link between Babel and confusion is not perceivable in translation: the narrative traces the name Babel to the Hebrew verb בָּלַל [bālal] meaning “to confuse,” or more commonly “to mix.” The link between the two is controversial among scholars,²⁵ but according to the narrative, which is the subject of the present study, here lies the origin of the name of the renowned city. Thus ends the text of the Babel episode.

An information given in the tenth chapter of Genesis nonetheless now becomes relevant: the genealogy of the sons of Noah, which now also represents a list of all the peoples of Earth following the confusion, and thus a list of all languages, since each people was made unable to understand the others.²⁶ As opposed to a single people united by a single language, the aftermath of

²⁵ The etymology is rather perplexing, as the similarity between “Babel” and “balal” is not as clear as one could expect, inciting scholars to find alternative etymologies. Certainly the most popular of these alternatives is to trace it to the Akkadian “bab-ilu” or the Old Babylonian “bāb-ilim,” both meaning “gate of God” (Kipfer, Barbara Ann. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Archaeology*. New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 2000: 50. Print.). A later plural form has also been proposed: the Neo-babylonian “bab-ilani” (“gate of the gods”), from which the Greek Βαβυλών would have come (See Buth, Randall, and R. Steven Notley. *The Language Environment of First Century Judaea: Jerusalem Studies in the Synoptic Gospels — Volume Two*. Leiden: BRILL, 2013: 76. Print.). Another view, which is more in line with the biblical text than the aforementioned ones, is to see “babel” as a contracted form of the Aramaic word for confusion: בַּלְבֵּל [balbēl] (Syriac: ܠܠܕܐ). The Aramaic root verb is the same as the Hebrew: “balal” (בָּלַל), but its reduplicated form indicating an intensive action is “balbel.” Even though such a form is not attested in Biblical Hebrew, the language of Moses possesses the same reduplication mechanism, so the existence of a “balbel” form is perfectly plausible. This view provides a good explanation for the apparently unconvincing etymology, but the question of the origin of the contraction remains, perhaps indicating that there is something deeper left to be discovered.

²⁶ According to the Masoretic Text, the total numbers of branches descending from the three sons of Noah is 70: 14 from Japheth, 30 from Ham, and 26 from Shem. The Septuagint contains two more names: Elisa and Cainan. The same Cainan appears in the genealogy in Luke 3:36, which is not surprising since most Old Testament quotes in the New Testament are taken from the Septuagint. S^t Luke the evangelist, the tradition of the Church and scholars as S^t Augustine have favored the text of the Septuagint (Saint Augustine. *The City of God, Books VIII–XVI (The Fathers of the Church, Volume 14)*. Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2010: 493. Print.), so we shall do the same here.

the event of Babel leaves mankind divided, and now composed of 72 peoples, with 72 languages, scattered across the earth.²⁷

The events depicted in the episode of Babel are rooted in the past transgression of Adam and Eve, but they will also have tremendous repercussions across the biblical (hi)story as a whole. The confusion of tongues shifts the narrative in a radically different direction, from the (hi)story of one people with a single language, appearing to have a single will, to the (hi)story of a complex, manifold world, where linguistic diversity implies discord, strife, war, but where it perhaps also initiates an introspection, a reflection concerning man's deeds, his past, and his future. Furthermore, as will be seen in the next section, the meaning of the confusion may be more than a mere punishment, and it may even reveal itself to be a blessing in disguise.

²⁷ Historically, the biblical account of the confusion of tongues and the dispersion had a profound impact on the way people considered languages and ethnicities in the Western world, up until early modern times. The 72 branches composing what is often called the "table of nations" have been the subject of intense speculations, whose goal was to trace the languages and peoples of the world back to one precise descendant of Noah. Perhaps the most persistent and widely used (even misused!) of these hypotheses concerns Noah's son Shem, to which people speaking so-called "Semitic" languages are traced: Arabs, Arameans, Babylonians, Ethiopians, Hebrews etc. Besides language families, the modern name of Egypt can also be found in the table of nations: מִצְרַיִם [Miṣrāyim] in Hebrew, son of Ham, which correspond to مصر [miṣr] in Arabic. Countless propositions have been made to try to trace the groups of people not directly identified in the Bible to one branch of the table. According to Isidore of Seville, Europeans are the sons of Japheth (Seville, Isidore (of). *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX. E typographeo Clarendoniano*, 1911: 181. Print.), and for Josephus the Scythians are the descendants of Magog (Josephus, Flavius. *The Works of Flavius Josephus: Comprising the Antiquities of the Jews, a History of the Jewish Wars, and Life of Flavius Josephus, Written by Himself*. Jas. B. Smith & Company, 1854: 47. Print.). This last name reveals the particular importance of the table of nations: more than a mere source of amusement for scholars searching for their origins, it possesses an important role for the interpretation of biblical prophecies, which often use the names of this table when prophesizing about nations. In the Apocalypse, Magog is mentioned as being deceived by Satan, making its identification a significant question for students of prophecy.

3.2 The meta-narrative of language in the Babel episode

*Vom Höchsten will ich
schweigen. Verbotene Frucht,
wie der Lorbeer, ist aber /
Am meisten das Vaterland.
Die aber kost' / Ein jeder
zulezt.*

Concerning what is highest, I
will be silent. Forbidden
fruit, like the laurel, is,
however, above all the
fatherland. Such, however,
each shall taste last.

— Hölderlin²⁸

Following the exile from Eden, the first couple gave birth to children, who in turn had many descendants. After ten generations, the group forms more than a family. The house of being is now sheltering a society, a people composed of men united by the fact that they dwell in the same abode, unified by a single language. Man's new mortal life also affected the house, as with each dying generation, all the structures; all the sign-blocks not supported by man's descendance are doomed to collapse and fall into oblivion. The house is like a straw hut caught in a storm, with man attempting to support its fluttering walls with his bare hands. It nevertheless grows. It is built further and further, as the house's new frailty is compensated by a considerable increase in the number of its inhabitants. After all this time on the earth, they are still wandering westward from the garden, living as nomads. At one point, the group nonetheless stops its wandering, as it "found a plain in the land of Shinar"²⁹ (Gen 11:2) and they thus decide to settle there.

The plain is like a blank slate for mankind, an opposite to the mountain, where the rivers necessary for life have their origin, but where man is also less in control of his surroundings. Perhaps following one of the four rivers of Eden, mankind goes down the

²⁸ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine."* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014: 267. Print; Original German from: GA 39:294.

²⁹ "וַיִּמְצְאוּ בְּקֶעֶחַ בְּאֶרֶץ שִׁנְעָר וַיָּשְׁבוּ שָׁם:" (Gen 11:2).

valley, to the plain, far away from the source of life, but nonetheless still enjoying its fruits. To go westward is also to go away from the rising sun, deeper into the night, losing sight of the origin, of Eden and the transgression that caused the exile, but also perhaps losing sight of the creator altogether.

Before examining the event that followed this settlement in the plain of Shinar, the changes that occurred between the fall and this arrival will first be examined, from the point of view of the meta-narrative. In particular, the transition from a humanity composed of a single couple to a group forming a society, set within a history, will be explored so as to better perceive the nature of the transformation that will be brought by the second *ek-stasis*.

3.2.1 Con-versation as a foundation of society and history

Man's being comes with language. Not as something he possesses, but rather the opposite: as something that possesses him; as "that which has the human being. What the human being is — we are a *conversation* [Gespräch]. We are since we have been a *con-versation*, addressed and brought to language."³⁰ What is meant by conversation here? It is not a mere exchange of words between persons but rather the way by which man becomes a human being by being brought to language, through *poiesis*, as when the poet attempts to bring an experience of the Φύσις into verse, or when a new word is crafted without being based on previous concepts. Furthermore, the quote of the German thinker is enriched through translation, as contrary to the original German word (*Gespräch*), which comes from a verbal form that can be interpreted as designating "something that is spoken" (*Ge-spräch*), the translation as

³⁰ This translation is based on the one found in Ibid.^t: 67, where the key term *Gespräch* is translated as "dialogue." It is philologically correct, but misses, it would seem, the intention of the author, who appears to emphasize the literal sense of the word: something that is spoken, something brought to language. This term will thus be translated as *con-versation*, where the hyphen is meant to highlight the fact that a *Gespräch* is both the bringing to language as a result of a *poiesis*, a bringing to "verse," and the sharing of what is brought with a group of people; Original German: "Die Sprache ist daher nichts, was der Mensch hat, sondern umgekehrt Jenes, was den Menschen hat. Was der Mensch ist — wir sind ein Gespräch. Seit ein Gespräch wir sind, angesprochen, zur Sprache gebracht." From: GA 39:74.

“conversation” can be interpreted as “con-versation”: a bringing into poetical verse (-versation), performed conjointly by a group of men³¹ (con-). This translation unveils an aspect of man’s relationship with language that was concealed in the words of Heidegger.

Man is not only *spoken by language* in general (*Ge-sprochen*), he is *con-versation*. His being rests on the *poiesis* that marked the world’s foundation. Man is brought to the world, to language, and he is also someone who brings the earth, the skies and his own creations to the world. He is put into verse, but he can also versify. Furthermore, he is *con-versation*, meaning that the *poiesis* at the center of man’s being is not an individual, but rather a social process. His being is not only a being-there (*Da-sein*), in the world, but also “essentially being with one another [*Mitsein*], being for and against one another.”³² The world is indeed built not only from the raw earth but also from the previous work of other men, which can be re-worked, re-shaped, or tended like a growing tree. When Adam and Eve were in the garden, they formed the embryo of mankind, but it is only when they arrive in Shinar that they begin to form a society, which is more than a concatenation of individual egos, but rather what marks the birth of man as a historical being.

As the world is being built by countless men, it begins to emerge as something more than the sum of all the contributions brought by its builders. It becomes independent of any particular person and now rests on the society formed by the settlers of the plain as a whole. The account of the evolution of this world is a part of the essence of history. It is the story of the strife of earth and world of each individual, seen in its collective dimension, as con-versation. The nature of this con-versation is manifold: it firstly represents man’s bringing of the earth and the skies to language, but also all the interactions between men that occur through language, and in particular, the manner in which

³¹ It should be noted that the etymology of the word “conversation” does not correspond to the interpretation that is given here, as a *poiesis* performed by two or more persons. The two words nonetheless do indeed share a common origin: the Latin *vertō* (“to turn around”) is the root word of poetical “verses” and “conversation,” which literally means “to turn around” or “to ponder together.”

³² Ibid.^t: 126, word in brackets added; Original German: “das Dasein des Menschen in sich schon versetzt ist in das Dasein Anderer, d. h. nur ist, wie es ist, im Mitsein mit den Anderen.” From: GA 39:143.

they take part in the collective dimension of the strife of earth and world. The strife begins with individual persons, but as it is linked to the building of the house of being and the world it opens, which both are the product of a community of dwellers, the individual strife is thus coupled with those of other men. This implies that each member of the group may have the power to tilt the strife in a specific direction, on a large scale: someone whose strife is in perfect equilibrium, succeeding in grounding the world deep into the earth, might be able to propagate his success to his fellow human beings like a wildfire, but it also means that someone who has lost sight of the ground and has given himself completely to metaphysical clouds, to the groundless, might be able to quench this fire with an equally swift downpour. Therefore, just as language is one of the most dangerous things, in the words of Heidegger, conversation also presents its own danger. Con-versation implies a meta-strife, a strife of the strifes of individuals, which will become an inconspicuous and yet central element of the meta-narrative as a whole.

The biblical universe and its history have often been seen as a battle between good and evil, sin and virtue, but seldom as a strife of world and earth, and even less as a con-versation. These different conceptions, far from opposing each other, may only represent different perspectives on the same phenomenon. A virtuous action may be seen as one that is grounded, one that reflects the Φύσις, and whose origin is always linked to the divine by a chain of causes all the way up to the *prima causa*. By grounding his world, man fulfills his purpose, his ἀρετή [areté], that is, his “virtue.” On the other hand, sins may also be seen as actions that lack ground: sins are committed following an illusory justification in the world, one that may form a long and strong chain inside the world, but which nonetheless has a loose end; which is tied up to the clouds, and therefore is useless for the grounding of an action. Thus seen, the importance of the strife of world and earth may become more apparent: true *con-versation* is the strife for the building of a grounded world by mankind, that is, a world based on virtue, a world in perfect harmony with the Φύσις and its divine creator. Such a con-versation is a true “saying” (*Sage*). It fulfills the purpose of language and being, as opposed to a mere “idle-talk” (*Rede*), the “use” of language that is linked neither to the Φύσις nor to the Deity, and thus misses its purpose: it is *sin* in its

original Hebrew (חטא) or Greek sense (αμαρτία), which designates the act of missing a target. To sin could thus be seen not only as falling prey to a temptation but foremost as a failure to ground one's world in the Φύσις, something that represents a denial of one's own purpose within it.

Therefore, *con-versation* designates the essence of the mankind-wide strife of world and earth, which can, in fact, be seen as a new perspective on the well-known battle between godliness and sinfulness, at the heart of the whole biblical narrative. Such *con-versation* grows exponentially, as does the number of dwellers of the house of being following the fall. This term highlights the fact that man's being rests on both language and community. Man cannot *be* without language, and he cannot *be* without other human beings. He is *con-versation*, but he also *con-verses*, with his fellow humans, with the earth, with the skies, with the heavenly hosts, and foremost with the Deity, which brought him to language but is also brought to language by man, through poetry, art, or prayer. The birth of the "social man," following the appearance of a multiplicity of dwellers, also comes with something that will deeply affect him until the end of times, shaping the depth of his being: tradition.

3.2.2 Tradition as a new facticity

Many things have been brought to language from the days of Adam, some of which have disappeared with the course of time, or were transformed and subsequently became unrecognizable. Others have passed the trial of time and remain as part of the house of being, the dwelling given to mankind as an inheritance from generations to generations. When we speak of ancient traditions, we usually have in mind patterns of behavior and foremost orally transmitted stories that form the basis of human cultural life, or even extra-linguistic expressions of culture, but we often fail to notice that our language is itself a tradition. Already in the 18th century, the German pioneer of the philosophy of language Johann David Michaelis was conscious of this fact, as he observed that "language is ... a sort of Archives where human discoveries are protected from the most unfortunate accidents; Archives that the flame would not be able to destroy without the total destruc-

tion of the nation.”³³ In the case of the narrative, this archive is the *lingua adamica*, here presumed to be a form of Hebrew, which at this point contains remnants from the lives and thought of ten generations of men and women.

The house of being is indeed a storehouse that resists the onslaught of armies and the passage of time better than any dwelling made of stones or bricks. It is, in the words of Michaelis: “a heap of wisdom and of the genius of the nations, to which everyone added a part.”³⁴ The German author mentions the knowledge of the sexual differentiation of plants as an example of the wisdom contained in the languages of the ancient Semitic peoples, a knowledge that reached European languages only in his time.³⁵ Such a knowledge was not passed on through books and scrolls but was rather embedded in their language itself. This is just an illustration of the fact that language is not only a vector of tradition and information, but that language *is* tradition, language contains information in itself.

The metaphor of the archive or the storehouse nonetheless presents some danger of misrepresentation. Language indeed is not a place in which man could enter to take any information he wants and then simply leave, and it is not a tool that can be put away when it is not needed: language is the house of being, a house which is not a place meant to be merely “visited.” It is the place that man dwells in, and that brings him to being. Man cannot leave this house, which makes him who he is, a human being. It represents a central element of man’s facticity. As was seen in the previous chapter, language contains a meta-physical structure which is both formed by man and forms man. In the days of Adam, in the garden, this meta-physical structure was mainly the product of his own work. With the advent of man as

³³ TBA. Text translated from the French version: “Le langage est donc une sorte d’Archives où les découvertes humaines sont à l’abri des plus fâcheux accidens ; Archives que la flamme ne sauroient périr que dans la ruine totale de la nation.” From: Michaelis, Johann David. *De l’influence des opinions sur le langage et du langage sur les opinions*. Bremen, 1762: 28–29. Print; French edition of: Michaelis, Johann David. *Beantwortung der Frage von dem Einfluß der Meinungen in die Sprache und der Sprache in die Meinungen*. Berlin, 1760. Print.

³⁴ Ibid.^t: 27. “l’amas de la sagesse & du génie des nations, où chacun a mis du sien.”

³⁵ Ibid.^t: 18.

a historical, social being in the plain of Shinar, this meta-physical structure forming the architecture of the house of being is now the product of countless men, and parts of it are passed on across time, radically affecting subsequent generations.

The men of Shinar thus inherit a meta-physical tradition passed on from Adam, a tradition whose origin may appear to them as shrouded in mystery. There may have been particular reasons for calling an animal using a certain name or categorizing things in a certain way, but the tradition can pass on words without passing on the story of their origin or the reasons justifying their appearance. Such justifications may nonetheless be recovered by paying attention to the etymology of words, about which Michaelis says that it is “a treasure of good-sense: it contains truths that are overlooked by most philosophers.”³⁶ Some of these etymologies may nevertheless be irremediably lost. Man therefore inherits a house which is already built, and whose architecture partly escapes him. This meta-physical architecture contributes to the shaping of his world, as language provides him with a ready-made structure that he can use to perceive the Φύσις, which is one and continuous, as an intelligible set of things, plural and discontinuous. Adam made his own structure through *poiesis*, as he forged his own language in Eden. The men of Shinar, on the other hand, are handed over a pre-built structure, a tradition that constrains the way they perceive the Φύσις. This structure is not rigidly fixed, of course, and any man has the power to transform it, but he will need a strong incentive to do so, as the structure has a tendency to conceal itself, and it remains invisible to those living in everydayness.

Only when “words break off”³⁷ may man realize that the discontinuous representation given by the house of being is not what the Φύσις really is, and see that his language imposes a grid on it, which affects his perception. The forgetfulness of the role played by metaphysics is facilitated by tradition, as the limitations and arbitrariness of language are more easily perceived when one is the architect of this metaphysics. In Shinar, the men will mostly see this tradition as a “natural” order of things, the way it has

³⁶ Ibid.^t: 27 “Elle est un trésor de bon-sens: elle renferme des vérités qui échappent à la plupart des philosophes.”

³⁷ Quote from a poem by Stefan George, in: Heidegger, Martin. *On the Way to Language*. New York: HarperCollins, 1982: 60. Print; Original German: “Kein ding sei wo das wort gebricht,” from GA 12:153.

always been, with the work of time increasing the authority of this tradition, which becomes harder and harder to change. Does this imply that the meta-physical tradition represents an impediment for man's growth?

The meta-physical architecture of the house of being is what makes the $\Phi\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma\iota\varsigma$ intelligible to man. At this point in the narrative, this structure is, for the most part, inherited from previous generations, but it also is transformed by each individual who dwells in the house of being. This social and temporal nature of the meta-physical structure induces an inertia: the past influences the present, and man is influenced by his neighbors. Such an influence is neither inherently beneficial nor detrimental. It is only a remanence, a trail left by the past, or a diffusion from person to person. This remanence and this diffusion show man that what he is, and everything that he does, says, or thinks, is inserted within a history and a community, which are both beyond his control. He can influence the present and the future, but he is irremediably conditioned by the past through the tradition that makes him human. This shows that each man has a responsibility: his actions can be reverberated across generations and across his community, just as he is now affected by the choices taken by his neighbors and the men who contribute to the building of the house of being that he dwells in.

Therefore, the tradition is what the men who contribute to build it make it to be: it can be beneficial to mankind as a whole when it is built wisely, being grounded in the earth and a faithful representation of the $\Phi\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma\iota\varsigma$, but it can also be detrimental if it is the product of carelessness, a metaphysics bound to the clouds, lacking roots in the earth. An illustration of this fact can be found in the work of Michaelis, who argues that the Latin word for God, *Deus*, almost always connotes a plural sense, even when used in its singular form, contrary to its French or German equivalent, which would unambiguously refer to the one God of the Christian faith.³⁸ Such a claim is more convincing in Hebrew, where the Deity is designated by the word "Elohim" (אֱלֹהִים), which has the peculiarity of containing the ending normally reserved for plural nouns "-im" (ים-), which could be interpreted as predisposing the

³⁸ Michaelis, Johann David. *De l'influence des opinions sur le langage et du langage sur les opinions*. Bremen, 1762: 12. Print.

Hebrew speaker to monotheism, as the expression of a multiplicity of gods would also use the same word, and therefore be ambiguous, as if the language itself was reluctant to express the idea of polytheism. An opposite example nonetheless seems even more convincing: the difficulty of being monotheist if one only speaks a language that does not possess any traditional word for “God.” Such was the case of the Chinese tongue when the first missionaries attempted to preach monotheism in the Far-East, and one of their first tasks there was to decide how to designate the Deity, a problem that continues to this day, as three different names are now used by Christian churches, names that were based on words designating pagan deities or “spirits,”³⁹ taking root in tradition but shifting it away from polytheism. This merely illustrates the inertia exerted by the tradition embedded in language, which can either be a help or an obstacle to man, depending on the will of the builders of this tradition.

Michaelis mentions another interesting example of this phenomenon: the Greek word δόξα [dóxa], which both means “glory” and “opinion.” The German scholar argues that this close linguistic association between glory and opinion would imply that:

In order to imagine that there could be Glory independently of the favorable judgment that one has of his good qualities, it would have been necessary for them to forget their language. It would not have been possible for the Metaphysician to err so much from the common manner of thinking, that he would pretend that God enjoys the Glory in the solitude of eternity.⁴⁰

This statement certainly overestimates the power of tradition, which can always be escaped if an equally powerful incentive presents itself. It nonetheless provides a good illustration of the effect of the

³⁹ The three words are 天主 [tiān zhǔ] (“Lord of the Sky”), 神 [shén] (“Spirit”), and 上帝 [shàng.dì] (“Emperor of the Upper [World.]”). See Kim, Sangkeun. *Strange Names of God: The Missionary Translation of the Divine Name and the Chinese Responses to Matteo Ricci’s “Shangti” in Late Ming China, 1583–1644*. Peter Lang, 2004.

⁴⁰ TBA. From the French edition: “pour s’imaginer qu’il puisse y avoir de la Gloire indépendamment du jugement favorable que l’on porte de nos bonnes qualités, il eût falu qu’ils eussent oublié leur langue. Il n’étoit gueres possible que le Métaphysicien s’égarât de la façon commune de penser, au point de prétendre que Dieu jouit de la gloire dans la solitude de l’éternité.” From: *Ibid.*^t: 25.

linguistic tradition, which can both conceal or reveal.

In order not to fall prey to the dangers of tradition, one must first become conscious of their existence and be able to identify them. Already in the early 17th century, Francis Bacon dedicated a part of his *New Organon* to this question, as he described different “idols” that negatively affect the human mind, which he thus defined: “The idols and false notions that now possess the human intellect and have taken deep root in it don’t just occupy men’s minds so that truth can hardly get in, but also when a truth is allowed in they will push back against it.”⁴¹ Among the four types of idols identified by Bacon, two are closely tied with linguistic traditions.

The first type is the “idols of the marketplace” (*idola fori*), designating the impediment caused by “wrong or poor choices of words.”⁴² The appropriateness of words handed over by tradition is indeed seldom questioned, even though they can influence the way man thinks *in* language. Bacon notes that:

The idols of the market place are the most troublesome of all — idols that have crept into the intellect out of the contract concerning words and names. Men think that their reason governs words; but it is also true that words have a power of their own that reacts back onto the intellect . . . When a language-drawn line is one that a sharper thinker or more careful observer would want to relocate so that it suited the true divisions of nature, words stand in the way of the change.⁴³

These idols may be seen as groundless signs, a language that is not

⁴¹ Bacon, Francis. *The New Organon or: True Directions Concerning the Interpretation of Nature*. Trans. Jonathan Bennett. Np.:N.p. 2005: 7. PDF. Original Latin: “Idola et notiones falsae, quae intellectum humanum jam occuparunt atque in eo alte haerent, non solum mentes hominum ita obsident, ut veritati aditus difficilis pateat; sed etiam dato et concessa aditu.” From: Bacon, Francis. *The Works of Francis Bacon*. Frommann, 1858: 163. Print.

⁴² Ibid.^t: 8. Original Latin: “mala et inepta verborum impositio.” From *ibid.*^o: 8.

⁴³ Ibid.^t: 12. Original Latin: “At idola fori omnium molestissima sunt; quae ex foedere verborum et nominum se insinuarunt in intellectum. Credunt enim homines, rationem suam verbis imperare. Sed fit etiam ut verba vim suam super intellectum retorqueant et reflectant . . . Quum autem intellectus acutior, aut observatio diligentior, eas lineas transferre velit, ut illae sint magis secundum naturam; verba obstrepunt.” From: *ibid.*^o: 14.

bound to the Φύσις, but rather to the clouds; signs that have been handed over through tradition and are now a stumbling block for later generations.

The second type of idols directly related to language and tradition are the “idols of the theatre”⁴⁴ (*idola theatri*), an expression that designates the mistaken theories or beliefs that come from tradition and that are left unquestioned, thereby possibly inducing false reasonings. Since any combination of signs can be seen as a sign itself, the “idols of the theatre” can nonetheless be seen as identical to the “idols of the marketplace,” as any theory or belief can be reduced to a single sign, implying that any mistaken theory might be seen as a mistaken element of language.

The idols certainly are a redoubtable foe to the thinking man, but perhaps more dangerous than the idols themselves, which are a blindness induced by tradition, is the obliviousness to tradition itself, which can then hold sway over the human mind, as noted by Heidegger in *Being and Time*:

When tradition thus becomes master, it does so in such a way that what it ‘transmits’ is made so inaccessible, proximally and for the most part, that it rather becomes concealed. Tradition takes what has come down to us and delivers it over to self-evidence; it blocks our access to those primordial ‘sources’ from which the categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn. Indeed it makes us forget that they have had such an origin, and makes us suppose that the necessity of going back to these sources is something which we need not even understand.⁴⁵

Thus, even more dangerous than tradition is the blindness to the

⁴⁴ Ibid.¹: 13.

⁴⁵ Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Reprint edition. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008: 43. Print; Original German: “Die hierbei zur Herrschaft kommende Tradition macht zunächst und zumeist das, was sie »übergibt«, so wenig zugänglich, daß sie es vielmehr verdeckt. Sie überantwortet das Überkommene der Selbstverständlichkeit und verlegt den Zugang zu den ursprünglichen »Quellen«, daraus die überlieferten Kategorien und Begriffe z. T. in echter Weise geschöpft wurden. Die Tradition macht sogar eine solche Herkunft überhaupt vergessen. Sie bildet die Unbedürftigkeit aus, einen solchen Rückgang in seiner Notwendigkeit auch nur zu verstehen.” From: GA 2: 29.

effect of tradition, which prevents any attempt at counteracting the ill-effects of the idols.

For the men of the narrative, who arrive in Shinar, the tradition handed over from Adam is the only one that exists at this point. All dwell in the same house of being, which forms a single language. With the advent of man as a historical and social being, thrown within a tradition, this language knows an organic evolution. Parts of it fall into oblivion and disappear, while others remain as they are handed over to later generations. Some are transformed, being based on tradition but also being modified according to the will of those to whom they were handed over. Each man can only reach a part of the house of being that he inhabits, and he thus does not see language in its entirety. The unity of language at this point, one language shared by one people, implies an unimpeded flow between the different parts of the house that are inhabited by different people. The language as a whole is intelligible to any of its dweller with minimal efforts, and the new signs that are continuously created can swiftly be spread across the whole people.

This situation of complete intelligibility across the whole human population nonetheless further conceals the work of tradition, that is, its influence on the mind of men. As Hans-Georg Gadamer says: “tradition is a genuine partner in dialogue, and we belong to it, as does the I with a Thou.”⁴⁶ At this point in the meta-narrative, man can nonetheless hardly perceive the effect of language, let alone the effect of tradition itself, as he is thrown into a language and a tradition that will only be perceived when they “break off,” something that will only occur at a later point. For now, language has given men the means to organize themselves and to work toward a common goal, but the tradition has failed to transmit the lesson of the fall from Eden. As they arrive in Shinar, men are not equipped with a proper defense, and the clouds are surrounding them. United by a single language, men can see it

⁴⁶ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2 Revised edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004: 352. Print; Original German: “Denn ein echter Kommunikationspartner, mit dem wir ebenso zusammengehören wie das Ich mit dem Du, ist auch die Überlieferung.” From: Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gesammelte Werke: Band 1: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. A. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010: 364. Print.

as a tool allowing them to transcend their individual limitations and allowing them to organize themselves to further their mastery over the earth. Thus, language not only helps them perceive the Φύσις, it also helps them develop its counterpart: the Τέχνη.

3.2.3 The rise of the technique made possible by language

Soon after their arrival in the plain of Shinar, in the narrative, the descendants of Adam and Eve begin their new life by developing a technique that will transform the way they dwell in the land: “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.’ And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.”⁴⁷ In this seemingly trivial account of an earthly action, we find the hint of an inconspicuous and yet important event, whose consequences will affect the rest of the meta-narrative. It indeed marks the rise of the technique in the life and the world of mankind, a rise allowed by language and facilitated by its unicity, which can imbalance the equilibrium between earth and world that is crucial for man’s unveiling and appropriation of his destiny.

With men united by one language, the technique can grow and change their existence, in both its earthly and worldly dimensions. The *poiesis* is the first and most fundamental technique, as it is the source of language, as illustrated by the building of the house of being by Adam described in the previous chapter. Here, in Shinar, it is a new technique that appears, one that will be used for another kind of building: the making of bricks. Such bricks are made from the earth, both as the matter composing the universe and as the soil on which man walks and on which he dwells. The soil is one, continuous like an image of the whole Φύσις, but by putting some of it in wooden frames it is formed into “things,” bricks of earth that are countable, distinct from the one soil. Burning these blocks dries up the moisture in them. It changes their color and renders them hard as rock. Bitumen will make them resist the work of the skies: it will keep the rain and the wind away from them, and prevent time from reclaiming them to the earth. The making of the bricks echoes with the *poiesis* used to build the house of being, the process that transforms the continuous universe into “things.”

⁴⁷ Gen 11:3.

Both are examples of the use of a technique. However, just as the ability to build signs was shown to be a double-edged sword that can benefit mankind but also put him in danger, the ability to build material structures will prove to have the same peculiarity.

Until now, the descendants of Adam were continuously migrating from the East, living a nomadic lifestyle, dwelling in leather tents and sleeping upon the naked earth. Such a lifestyle would naturally keep men from building a world lacking ground, one based on clouds, as the divine creation would be right in front of their eyes at all times. Every day of their lives, they would feel the earth with their fingers, smell the plants with their nose, hear the leaves dancing with the wind, and taste fresh fruits with their tongues. Dwelling in leather tents or stone caves, man would still perceive the sky through the blowing wind. Man forms tents from the skin of animals, bringing “things” to the world through a rudimentary technique, but this use of a technique is driven by a necessity, which is to be protected from the overwhelming power of the earth and the skies: rain, frost, the sun, animals. Tents are ephemeral and the skins used to make them are sufficiently scarce to force men to treat them with respect, as something granted by the Deity rather than something that man naturally deserves. Tents are easily perceivable as present-at-hand, as things emerging from the earth and linked to their origin: the creatures, the earth, the Φύσις, and the Deity.

By devising a new technique, construction with bricks and mortar, the men of Shinar are thus choosing a new life path, leaving behind the caves and the tents in order to build things by transforming and using the raw earth. The new technique is not inherently detrimental to their life, but it can, in this precise case, pave the way to an alienation from the Φύσις, thereby leading them to abandon the strife of world and earth, which is necessary for them to progress on the path toward their destiny. One may ask what difference does dwelling in a leather tent or a brick building make? An essential aspect of this difference is that the technique is “the organization and the organ of the will to will,”⁴⁸ and thus the motivation behind the development of a technique is what matters to determine its effect. Here, the use of the new technique does

⁴⁸ TBA. Original German: “die Organisation und das Organ des Willens zum Willen.” From: GA 55: 192.

not arise out of necessity, nor does it find its origin in the will to ground the world further into the earth. Whether the men of Shinar consciously will it at this point or not, the manufacture of bricks and the extraction of mortar can become a stumbling block on the bridge between their world and the earth. Used blindly, the brick structures that can form whole cities may shut man off from a direct experience of the earth and the skies, and leave him in a predominantly man-made technical universe, with a world severed from the Φύσις and developing itself as a groundless metaphysics, that is, in the clouds.

Within cities of bricks and mortar, all that men see is the work of their own hands, while the work of the Deity, the Φύσις, is concealed and gradually falls into oblivion. The earth slowly comes to be seen only as a reserve of material,⁴⁹ that is, be seen only in its potential use as part of a technical enterprise. The earth and the skies' nature are concealed as a result of this process: their place in the Φύσις, and their relation to the Deity and the destiny of mankind are forgotten, as they cease to be seen in their presence-at-hand, and progressively become mere ready-to-hand objects. Such an attitude may even not be driven by a conscious will, as man almost always deems himself in control of the technique, and this even though, as Heidegger notes, all "control of technicity, all claim to wanting to be its master, is . . . only an illusion that covers up — pretty badly at that — the meta-physical enslavement to technicity."⁵⁰ Thus, when man loses sight of the earth through his misuse of a technique, he can also lose control of himself, and forget the nature of his destiny. Here, we find an example showing how language can affect man's being, his life on earth and his world, which are all intertwined. The technique is an earthly manifestation of a worldly power arising from language, one that is reinforced by its unicity. Such a misuse of a technique is precisely what is happening to the settlers of Shinar, as will now be seen.

⁴⁹ "Bestand," as "standing reserve" in Heidegger.

⁵⁰ Heidegger, Martin. *Mindfulness*. London: A&C Black, 2006: 152. Print; Original German: "Alle neuzeitliche Beherrschung der Technik, jeder Anspruch, ihrer Herr sein zu wollen, ist daher nur ein Schein, der die Versklavung — metaphysisch verstanden — schlecht genug verdeckt." From: GA 66: 173.

3.2.4 The building of the tower and of the world in the clouds

ܕܗܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܢܝܢ ܕܠܡ
ܕܡܢܝܢ ܕܡܢܝܢ ܕܡܢܝܢ

They stand in the light, and
yet seek for it.

They touched gold and
imagined it the sun.

— S^t Ephrem, *Hymns on Faith*⁵¹

Following the discovery of the new building technique, the men declare: “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”⁵² The fall of Adam and Eve started with words, in the world. Man’s fate, however, was sealed with a deed, on the earth: the eating of the fruit. In Shinar, the lessons of the fall do not seem to have been passed on by tradition, and (hi)story thus repeats itself. The earthly construction of the tower will also be linked with profound changes in the world’s architecture. The tower of Babel reaching the sky from the earth will have a counterpart in the world, one that the men of Shinar will also attempt to build, separating the world from the earth and basing it on clouds.

Equipped with their newly discovered building technique, the men decide to build a city and a tower. Far from simply being a displacement of earthly matter, building is foremost, “by virtue of constructing locations, a founding and joining of spaces.”⁵³ As the building of the house of signs opened a world, a physical building

⁵¹ Translation from: Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847: 191. Print; Original Syriac from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1961: 94. Print.

⁵² “וַיֹּאמְרוּ הִבָּה נִבְנֶה-לָּנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל וְרֹאשׁוֹ בַּשָּׁמַיִם וְנַעֲשֶׂה-לָּנוּ שֵׁם כְּפִן-נִפְוִץ” : “עַל-פָּנֵי כָּל-הָאָרֶץ” (Gen 11:4).

⁵³ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2001: 156. Print; Original German: “Deshalb ist das Bauen, weil es Orte errichtet, ein Stiften und Fügen von Räumen.” From: GA 7: 160.

also marks the appearance of a place, a location, and the opening of a space. Man builds and opens, but this is not the primary way by which he is associated with buildings: “man’s relation to locations, and through locations to spaces, inheres in his dwelling.”⁵⁴ The city and the tower are not only architectural works, the demonstration of a technical capability: they are the new dwellings of men, their new home, the way they will live on the earth. Moreover, the building of Babel finds its origin in the technique that arose through language, but the construction itself will also become the source of a major transformation of man’s language, one operated by the hand of the Deity.

A building is more than a pile of earth, and the tower’s significance transcends its material nature. Heidegger well described the nature of building and dwelling, as he pondered this question in the ruins of his homeland during and after the Second World War.⁵⁵ A building is a foremost a “thing.” He takes the example of a jug to describe the essence of things, something that will help us uncover the essence of dwelling: a jug, which is made of an earthly wall that opens an empty space made to contain water or wine.⁵⁶ The essence of the jug is nevertheless not limited to its capacity to contain: “The jughood of the jug essences in the gift of the pour.”⁵⁷ This “gift” (*das Ge-schenk*, something that is sent), the essence of the thingness of the thing, is the ability to gather within the open space. Heidegger thus poetically describes the gift of the jug:

In the water of the gift there abides the spring. In the spring abides the stone and all the dark slumber of the earth, which receives the rain and dew of the sky. In the water of the spring there abides the marriage of sky and earth. They abide in the wine that the fruit of the vine provides, in which the nourishment of the earth and the sun of the sky are betrothed to each other. In

⁵⁴ Ibid.^t: 155. Original German: “Der Bezug des Menschen zu Orten und durch Orte zu Räumen beruht im Wohnen.” From: GA 7: 160.

⁵⁵ The heart of Heidegger’s reflection on this subject can be found in his brilliant article entitled *Building Dwelling Thinking*, in Ibid.^t: 141.

⁵⁶ Ibid.^t: 10, GA 79: 11.

⁵⁷ Heidegger, Martin. *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures: Insight Into That Which Is and Basic Principles of Thinking*. Indiana University Press, 2012: 10. Print; Original German: “Das Krughafte des Kruges west im Geschenk des Gusses,” from: GA 79: 11.

the gift of water, in the gift of wine, there abides in each case the sky and earth. The gift of the pour however is the jughood of the jug. In the essence of the jug there abides earth and sky. The gift of the pour is a libation for the mortals. It quenches their thirst. It enlivens their efforts. It heightens their sociability. But the gift of the jug is also at times given for consecration⁵⁸

The gift of the jug is to gather the Φύσις within the space opened up by the vessel: the earth, the skies, the Deity, and mortals can be summoned through the gift of the pouring. They *can* be thus gathered, but this fact is not always recognized by the man who uses the jug to pour. The optimal manifestation of the gift of the jug is the libation, when the pouring is a gathering of the Φύσις dedicated to the Deity, and a witnessing of the manner in which the pouring is related to the creation as a whole: the water, the source, the earth, the skies and the rest, but foremost its creator. Pouring can nonetheless also be done as a profane act, in “everydayness.” The gift is then concealed, waiting for someone who will see beyond its readiness-to-hand.

A building, like a jug, is also a “thing.” Dwelling is the gift of buildings, like pouring is the gift of the jug. Through the act of dwelling of its inhabitants, a building can gather the Φύσις in its midst, in the space it opens up. A building is formed from the earth, which is elevated toward the skies but nonetheless remains under them. It shelters man but it can also provide a space where the divine can appear, a calm location away from the overwhelming force of the elements, in the same manner that the darkness are the ideal place to perceive the presence of light. To dwell in a building is to let it gather, and to witness its gift, that is, to

⁵⁸ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2001: 170. Print; Original German: “Im Wasser des Geschenkes weilt die Quelle. In der Quelle weilt das Gestein, in ihm der dunkle Schlummer der Erde, die Regen und Tau des Himmels empfängt. Im Wasser der Quelle weilt die Hochzeit von Himmel und Erde. Sie weilt im Wein, den die Frucht des Rebstocks gibt, in der das Nährende der Erde und die Sonne des Himmels einander zugetraut sind. Im Geschenk von Wasser, im Geschenk von Wein weilen jeweils Himmel und Erde. Das Geschenk des Gusses aber ist das Krughafte des Kruges. Im Wesen des Kruges weilen Erde und Himmel. Das Geschenk des Gusses ist der Trunk für die Sterblichen. Er labt ihren Durst. Er erquickt ihre Muße. Er erheitert ihre Geselligkeit. Aber das Geschenk des Kruges wird bisweilen auch zur Weihe geschenkt.” From: GA 7: 174.

perceive in the act of dwelling in it the fullness of the Φύσις gathered in its midst. Like any other “thing,” the building’s gift is nonetheless not always perceived, and man can transform an act of dwelling into a simple being-inside a construction, missing the presence-at-hand of the dwelling as well as its relation to the rest of the Φύσις and the Deity. In order to truly dwell, man must stay close to the *poiesis*, as stated by Albert Hofstadter in his introduction to *Poetry, Language, Thought*: “If man’s being is dwelling, and if man must look to the way the world fits together to find the measure by which he can determine his dwelling life, then man must dwell poetically.”⁵⁹ To dwell poetically means to see beyond the readiness-to-hand of the earthly construction: the *poiesis*, by bringing the Φύσις to language, to the world, allows man to perceive all that is gathered in the space opened up by the building, that is, to perceive the wholeness of the Φύσις, through the act of dwelling.

The libation is where the jug’s gift is presented in its purest form. In what kind of construction does the gift of building find its uttermost expression? The temple is what would seem the most fitting answer. It foremost is a building, like any other: “the temple-work, standing there, opens up a world and at the same time sets this world back again on earth, which itself only thus emerges as native [*heimatliche*] ground.”⁶⁰ The temple is nonetheless more than this, as it is consecrated to the Deity. Any man-made dwelling opens up a space where a gathering can take place: a gathering of the earth, the heavens, and man. This space is made from earth, but not really part of it, as it is man-made. It is located under the heavens, engulfed in the ether, but it also veils the skies to the dweller. It is located within the Φύσις, but it is also a fruit of the Τέχνη. The temple, on the other hand, is a building dedicated to the Deity, to which it gives a space within its walls, where it can reveal itself. It represents the perfect form, the ideal building, as it gathers Φύσις and Τέχνη together, heaven and earth, man and the Deity. The gathering accomplished by the temple is not only something worldly, something meta-physical. It is intertwined with the aspects of human life that have the deepest roots

⁵⁹ Ibid.^t: xiv.

⁶⁰ Ibid.^t: 41; Original German: “Das Tempelwerk eröffnet dastehend eine Welt und stellt die-se zugleich zurück auf die Erde, die dergestalt selbst erst als der heimatliche Grund herauskommt.” From: GA 5: 28.

in the earth: “It is the temple-work that first fits together and at the same time gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human being.”⁶¹ The temple grounds man, and acts as an omphalos where his cultural world can be anchored into the earth. Other buildings, like a granary or a school, can also give a place to the Deity among other purposes, but their main *raison d’être* is to be a ready-to-hand means used for a profane purpose. Only the temple has the Deity and the gathering as its *raison d’être*. Its ideal nature thus explains why villages and cities, no matter how large or small, have consistently been built around temples, churches and other sacred spaces.

The city built by the descendants of Adam in Shinar significantly deviates from the aforementioned ideal of building and dwelling. Here, the city is indeed organized around a central structure: “a tower with its top in the heavens,”⁶² but it is not a temple. A temple gathers the earth and skies around man so that he will present them to the Deity, to which the space is con-secrated. In contrast, the tower of Shinar does not gather, but is rather meant to conquer. Men built a structure “that touched the stars and thought they might be able to climb the skies with it.”⁶³ To climb the skies is to leave the earth, to reject the home that has been given to man, in an attempt to free himself from a facticity perceived as limiting the range of his actions and the extent of his dominion. The structure is meant to reach the heavens. It is meant not only to touch the clouds, but to tower over them as well, thereby denying the influence of the skies over mankind, and denying the necessary grounding of the world, in the earth.

The effect of the tower is similar in both the narrative and the meta-narrative, in the earth and in the world. It is a cutting off from the earth, taking the form of an escapism: man heads toward the heavens, that is, toward the clouds.⁶⁴ As a temple or a church, the tower is where the spiritual focus of the people is drawn, but

⁶¹ Ibid.^t: 41.

⁶² Gen 11:4.

⁶³ Louth, Andrew, ed. *Genesis 1–11 (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2016: 169. Print.

⁶⁴ In the case of the world, no “elevation” is needed for it to be separated from the earth. It only needs to lack ground.

contrary to them, it leaves no space to gather man and the Deity, the earth and the heavens: it is a temple dedicated to man himself, not meant to gather anything besides his own *ego*. It attempts to dominate or even deny the other elements of the Φύσις, by using an architectural trick. Man does not wish to gather the earth, he therefore attempts to leave it behind through an elevation in the ether. He does not want to gather the skies, he will thus tower over them, above the clouds, thinking he would thereby nullify their influence. He does not want to submit himself to the divine authority, he will thus try to replace the Deity, making the tower an idol to himself, so high and imposing that it would not be possible for men to ignore it, like the sun in a clear blue sky.

The tower therefore gives the men of Shinar an illusory sense of power, as they believe that they are masters over themselves. Its building is nonetheless a mis-construction, as it perverts the nature of building, its “thingness,” by refusing its essence which is to gather. Moreover, the work of the builders is not limited to a physical building: their endeavor is also extended in the world. They intend to build in the world as they built the tower on the earth, as they declare “let us make a name for ourselves.” They will try to isolate the house of being from the earth, the skies and the Deity, denying its capacity to gather, which is part of its purpose, part of the reason why it was built in the first place, conjointly by Adam and his creator. As was seen in the previous chapter, the forging of names contributes to the building of the house of being, but it also affects the meta-physical architecture of man’s world.

Names can affect the order of the world, and this is precisely what the men of Shinar seem to intend by making a name “for themselves.” Like their physical counterparts, names are constructions, which are supposed to gather the earth, the skies, and man, so as to elevate them toward the Deity. The ideal name would thus be the name of the Deity, as an in-vocation from a man who is grounded in the earth and gathers the skies before uttering the name. Through the sacred utterance, he would consecrate his dwelling place, that is, his house of being. To make a name “for oneself” is therefore a mis-naming, in the same manner that the earthly tower is a mis-building. It corrupts the essence of the house of being, which is to gather the elements of the Φύσις, in a world, so as to make it intelligible to man. It is not a mere fall in everydayness, which unintentionally leads to an obliviousness to

the essence of language. Here, it rather represents an active undermining of this essence. Just as the tower is meant to conquer the heavens and replace the temple as the focus of human life, the name forged “for themselves” is not for mere fame, nor simply for the affirmation of an identity: this name is meant to conceal the Deity’s place in the house of being, and to substitute man’s name to the Deity’s as the centerpiece of the world. This name thus is foremost the mark of a meta-physical coup, the usurpation of the sign marking the dominion of the Deity over all creation, including mankind.

The coup operated by the men of Shinar is nonetheless only an illusion: the meta-physical transformation’s sole consequence is to cut off man’s world from the earth, and it does not reflect a true change of dominion, nor the disappearance of the Deity. Their world is only clouded by this action: its meta-physical structure does not reflect the reality of the Φύσις, and it leads man into the delusion that he is master over himself and over the whole universe (as modern men would declare: “god is dead”). The builders are here technicians rather than poets: they build language as a meta-physical construction, instead of letting themselves be guided by *poiesis*, by a growth of language rooted in the earthly phenomenon. They also envisioned both the tower and the name as a stable foundation for their ambition: “let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”⁶⁵ Both elements may act as rallying points to keep the people united, the tower bringing a physical focal point, while the name acts as a meta-physical one. The tower, by its height, would be visible from all the land, and be its most imposing structure, ensuring that the people will keep it as a reference, no matter how far they stray away from Shinar, being forcibly scattered or simply migrating from there.

In the same manner, the name that the men crafted to consecrate themselves as divine would ensure the existence of a common identity centered on it, that is, around themselves. The name, they may presume, would be carried across the land and across the ages through tradition, remaining a permanent spiritual and meta-physical focal point bringing the builders and their descendants together as a people, as a group of men that saw themselves

⁶⁵ Gen 11:2-4.

as having succeeded in establishing their dominion over themselves, and over the earth and the skies. Both the tower and the name are therefore intended to be beacons protecting the legacy of the builders from a dispersion. The first is located on the earth, and the second in the world, but these men built both their tower and their name in the clouds, without a proper ground, and no matter whether they believe in it or not; whether they recognize its dominion or not, the Deity will not remain idle in front of their actions.

3.2.5 The descent of God and the blindness of man

Following the building of the city and the tower, the Deity swiftly reacts by “coming down” to see the work of the sons of Adam. This occurs both on the earth and in the world, in the narrative and the meta-narrative: The Deity will enter the earthly city, but also enter the worldly house of being and see what they have done with the legacy of Adam. This coming down of the Deity is nonetheless not a mere anthropomorphic descent of God from the heavens. It is also linked with an aforementioned property of buildings: the fact that their essence is to gather in front of the Deity. Built according to its essence, a building is meant to gather the earth and the skies, man and the Deity in the midst of the space it opens up. In the case of the city and of its tower, which acts as its physical and spiritual center, in particular, man has deliberately excluded the Deity from his dwelling, gathering earth and skies toward himself alone, thereby attempting to sanctify himself and to assert his dominion over the whole creation. With this in mind, the “coming down” of the Deity can then be seen as the descent of the divine presence, which is to be gathered with the earth and the skies, through man who is the dweller of a building. It represents a manifestation of the Deity, one that counteracts the denial of the divine by the builders both on the earth and in the world. The voluntary mis-building nonetheless deliberately leaves no space for the Deity to descend to, as the consecrated space is occupied by men, who serve as priests of their own self-worship. The Deity will therefore have to use a different means to bring back mankind on the path of its destiny.

Having witnessed the decadence of man and of his world, as

the creature toppled its creator in order to put himself in its place, thereby creating an illusory meta-physical Copernican revolution, the Deity points out the origin of the misguided building enterprise, declaring: "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them."⁶⁶ The assessment of the reasons explaining man's straying from the path points out a worldly origin, rather than an earthly one. It argues that it is because they are all the dwellers of a single house of being that they believe themselves to be master over all creation. How are the two elements related?

As previously shown, contrast is necessary in order for something to be seen. Here, the unity of the people, through the dwellers' sharing of a single earthly city centered on the tower and through the fact that they all dwell in a single worldly house of signs centered on their own name, implies an absence of contrast, and therefore a blindness, a *lethe*. As they have cut off the *prima causa*, the creator, from their world, the fact that there is only one people living on earth can lead them to believe that they collectively control the earth, and that they can do everything they envision. The building of the tower "reaching the heavens" is a prime example of such behavior. Without any rival group, and with the illusion of the absence of the Deity, their dominion naturally appears unchallenged, resting on a sure basis. The fact that only one language is spoken on the earth induces a similar effect in the world. No matter to whom they speak, the utterances of the men of Shinar are intelligible to any man dwelling on the earth. Language flows unimpeded, leading the descendants of Adam to believe that they are masters of the world, like they are masters of the earth, as all that is brought to the world, that is, to language, is intelligible by all men. If all that can be envisioned by the mind, if the whole world is intelligible, man can then be led to think that it implies that he *knows* everything, that his intelligible world represents an unadulterated "truth," and that *his* world is a perfect and complete image of the universe. Without contrast, man can hardly conceive that his world is not the only possible representation of the universe, and that it might even be cut off from it, inducing a meta-physical delusion: the illusion that the control he has of his world is equivalent to a control of the universe, of which

⁶⁶ Gen 11:5-6.

the world is supposed to be a grounded representation.

Combined together, the oneness of the people and the oneness of their language constitute a slippery slope in front of the men of Shinar. Having severed themselves from their creator, there is nothing to prevent them from falling further and further down, toward the abyss of ungratefulness and arrogance. The tower “is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.”⁶⁷ After placing themselves, as a people, in the stead of the Deity, they could continue down this road, perhaps choosing one of them and name him a god, performing human sacrifices and worshiping idols of themselves, made by their own hands. There would be no end to their fall, but the statement that “nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them” only represents the state of their delusion, rather than a reality. Even though the Deity has been rejected from the world of the men of Shinar, its dominion is not affected by this, and it will respond to this second fall of man, as it did in Eden, like a father disciplining a troubled child: with firmness, love, and a will to teach the way to follow.

3.2.6 The response

בִּלְע אֲדָנִי פִלַּג לְשׁוֹנָם כִּי־רָאִיתִי חָמָס וָרִיב בְּעִיר:

Destroy their plans, O Lord, confuse their tongues;
for I see violence and strife in the city. (Psa 55:9)

The unity of the inhabitants of the plain of Shinar, as one people with one language, is thus the source of a *lethe*: they dwell on the land together without having the possibility to face another people. They inhabit the same house of signs without having any opportunity to be confronted with another, causing them to be blind to the nature of peoples and languages. Unable to step out from the house of being that they inhabit, and in which everything is intelligible, they are not only inclined to overestimate the truthfulness of their representation of the universe, that is, the truthfulness of their world, but they also are oblivious to the fact that they are dwelling in a particular house of being, which is not “natural,” but rather the product of a tradition in which the

⁶⁷ Gen 11:5–6.

will of their ancestors played a decisive role. They do not see the house, and its man-made architecture, but rather only see the universe through it, as if looking at the universe through a telescope without noticing the lenses and their effect.

The house of being is man's environment, which allows him to be human, explaining why he cannot abandon it without also losing what makes him a human being. Unable to step out of it, or even to see that other houses, with other meta-physical architectures, are possible, man does not see his own facticity, and especially his own limitations. Despite the appearances, his free will does not give him full control of the earth or the skies, nor control of his world and of his own destiny. But the deity has seen man stumble, and is prepared to react:

'Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.' So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth (Gen 11:7–9⁶⁸)

This event initiated by the Deity, commonly referred to as the “confusion of tongues,” marks the beginning of a dramatic transformation of language for the men of the biblical narrative, and a transformation of the dwelling place of the men of the meta-narrative. Before the confusion itself, the men are first scattered across the earth, marking the advent of the separation of mankind into peoples, firstly delimited by their location. The confusion itself will now be examined in more detail in order to see how it affects the dwellers of the house of being built by Adam, and the meta-φύσις as a whole.

⁶⁸ הָבֵה נִרְדָּה וְנִבְלָה שָׁם שְׂפָתָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אִישׁ שִׁפְתֵי רֵעֵהוּ: וַיִּפֶץ יְהוָה אֹתָם מִשָּׁם עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ וַיַּחְדְּלוּ לִבְנוֹת הָעִיר: עַל-כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ בָּבֶל כִּי-שָׁם: “כָּלֵל יְהוָה שְׂפַת כָּל-הָאָרֶץ וּמִשָּׁם הִפְצָם יְהוָה עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ: (Gen 11:7–9).

3.2.7 The confusion

The narrative, seen in the light of Church tradition, records that the people of Shinar is split into 72 groups, which are then scattered across the earth. Their unity as a single people is thus broken, and the land is now inhabited by 72 different peoples that will form the seeds of all future peoples. Each one of them forms a “society,” but not one seen in the modern English sense of the word. Before the separation, they were one, a society as the sum of all individual living on earth. After the event, the concept of ethnic differentiation will emerge: they will form a “society,” more in the sense reflected by the etymology of the Icelandic translation of this word, *þjóðfélag*, designating a partnership between members of an ethnic group. These partnerships will be sealed with a bond stronger than any geographical or ethnic unity, a bond that will make them share more than a parcel of earth: language. After being scattered, all but one group are made to dwell in a new house of signs, a new language. The remaining one is given custody of the Adamic language, inheriting the dwelling and the tradition of all mankind up until the confusion. For the first time, the unity of *language* crumbles and *languages* can appear. The members of each people will now be united, not only by the fact that they inhabit the same location on earth but also by their sharing of a world unique to each group: the world opened up by their house of being, which is different than the one of any other people.

A universe with one people, one language, and one world, has been transformed by the Deity into one that includes 72 peoples, 72 languages, and 72 worlds. The worldly realm is no longer composed of a single house of being: it is now a village, with 72 independent houses, which are like islands of being inhabited by different groups of beings. The emergence of these peoples will have a significant impact on man’s world. As told by the Lithuanian philosopher Antanas Maceina, “the groups of men that are now called ‘peoples’ . . . are not an accidental gathering of men thrown together but rather an organically evolving entity, having its own life, with its own surface and its own depth.”⁶⁹ They are “a current of spiritual

⁶⁹ TBA. Original Lithuanian: “Tos žmonių grupės, kurias šiandien vadiname tautomis . . . nėra atsitiktinio įvykio sublokštų žmonių sambūriai, bet organiškai išsivystę vienetai, turį savotišką gyvenimą ir savo paviršiuje, ir savo gelmėse.” From: Maceina, A. *Tautinis Auklėjimas*. Kaunas:n.p., 1934: 1.

forces, running from the past, through the present, and toward the future.”⁷⁰ Now, with the multiplicity of houses arising from the confusion, the river of man’s tradition is split into a multitude of brooks, running to water different lands.

Each one of the houses of being has a unique architecture, implying that the world they open is ruled by different guiding principles, by a different metaphysics. One group inherits the world and the tradition handed down from Adam, prolonging its legacy and also continuing to shape it according to the desires of its members. All the other groups have to start anew. The narrative is silent concerning the origin of the new languages, forcing us to speculate in order to uncover the circumstances of their appearance in the meta-narrative. Was each language simply given directly to each people, as an already-built house of sign, or did each people have to go through a building process similar to the one that took place with Adam during the onomastic covenant? In other words, did the new languages have a divine or human origin?

The first hypothesis is that each people could have been given a blank slate, and have to build a new house from the ground up. In this case, the new language would be more closely tied to the people’s environment, and its constraints: borrowing a famous example, a people living in the arctic would have many words for different types of snow,⁷¹ but perhaps no word for the color green, while people living in a tropical forest would have many ways to describe the different shades of green differentiating plants, but no word for ice. Each environment would constrain the metaphysical architecture of the house of being, meaning that each world is affected by the part of the earth from which it is built. Different peoples will see the universe from different perspectives, not only because of their physical environment but also because their world will be built with a particular metaphysics, a particular way to transform the continuous universe into a discontinuous set of “things,” organized and hierarchized according to a specific

Print.

⁷⁰ TBA. Original Lithuanian: “Tauta yra dvasinių jėgų srovė, iš praeities per dabartį slenkanti į ateitį.” From: Ibid.: 17.

⁷¹ This linguistic cliché has been the subject of controversies, but few would deny the fact that a people’s environment influences its language. See Franz Boas. “From the Emergence of the Field to the ‘Great Eskimo Vocabulary Hoax.’” *SIKU: Knowing Our Ice*. Ed. Igor Krupnik. New York City: Springer Verlag, 2010. Print.

architecture.

The second hypothesis would be that each people could be given a language with a pre-defined architecture, a house of being already built by the Deity. Both cases can be seen as having the same result: each people is given a particular perspective on the universe, a world-view characterized by the architecture of the house of being that this people dwell in. No matter whether the new languages are built by man or received as a gift, the divinely ordained scattering and the foreknowledge of the Deity imply that in both cases the result may be seen as planned with a sole intention: to give complementary views of the universe to each people. Any single one of these world-views cannot claim to be “true,” that is, a perfect representation of the universe. They are not meant to be hierarchized or seen as competing against one another. The members of each people can nonetheless claim one thing: that their world is their *own*, that it is something that they share between its members alone and that allows them to be human. It is *their own*, but not merely something that *they own*: “It is not we who have language; rather, language has us, in a certain way.”⁷² They own the house of being as much as the house owns them. They can shape language, but they are also shaped by it.

The confusion ends the era when all mankind was united by the fact that all men dwelt in a common house of being, making all humanity one people, *in* one language. From now on, mankind is divided into groups, each dwelling in a different house of being, and being thrown into a different world. This event is not a mere linguistic transformation: if language is indeed the “house of being,” what makes us human, the confusion of tongues represents more than the creation of a plurality of languages. It is an ontological “cata-strophe,” (κατα-στροφή) in its literal sense of over-turning. If language is what allows man to be human, the fact that different peoples do not share the same house of being could imply that the confusion changes the essence of mankind, and that different peoples not only have different manners of expressing themselves, but are rather living in different worlds. More importantly, they also have a different mode of being, a different

⁷² Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin's Hymns “Germania” and “The Rhine.”* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014: 24. Print; Original German: “Nicht wir haben die Sprache, sondern die Sprache hat uns, im schlechten und rechten Sinne.” From: GA 39: 23.

“beingness.” This, in turn, implies that the (hi)story of language overlaps the (hi)story of the being of beings, and the (hi)story of being itself. This question was raised already by Heidegger in *Being and Time*: “What kind of Being does language have, if there can be such a thing as a ‘dead’ language? What do the ‘rise’ and ‘decline’ of a language mean ontologically?”⁷³ This question is also worthy of being raised concerning the meta-narrative, in which the growth of language and languages occurs in harmony with the growth of mankind, and its spiritual development.

The geographical, linguistic and ontological separation that follows the construction of the tower should nonetheless not give the impression that language creates an impenetrable wall between peoples. At this point in the narrative, each people is indeed isolated by its language. This nonetheless will not remain the case forever, as languages have the capacity to evolve and interact with each other, as illustrated by Gadamer in the following quote:

In the same way as with perception we can speak of the ‘linguistic shadings’ that the world undergoes in different language-worlds. But there remains a characteristic difference: every ‘shading’ of the object of perception is exclusively distinct from every other, and each helps co-constitute the ‘thing-in-itself’ as the continuum of these nuances — whereas, in the case of the shadings of verbal worldviews, each one potentially contains every other one within it — i.e., each worldview can be extended into every other. It can understand and comprehend, from within itself, the ‘view’ of the world presented in another language⁷⁴

⁷³ Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Reprint edition. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008: 209. Print; Original German: “Welcher Art ist das Sein der Sprache, daß sie »tot« sein kann? Was besagt ontologisch, eine Sprache wächst und zerfällt?” From: GA 2: 221.

⁷⁴ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004: 444–445. Print; Original German: “In einem ähnlichen Sinne wie beim Wahrnehmen kann man von der sprachlichen Abschattung< reden, die die Welt in den verschiedenen Sprachwelten erfährt. Doch bleibt es ein charakteristischer Unterschied, daß jede >Abschattung< des Wahrnehmungsdinges von jeder anderen abschließend verschieden ist und das >Ding an sich< als das Kontinuum dieser Abschattung mitkonstituiert, während bei der Abschattung der sprachlichen Weltansichten eine jede von ihnen alle anderen potentiell in sich enthält, d. h. eine jede vermag sich selbst in jede andere zu erweitern. Sie vermag die >Ansicht< der Welt, wie sie sich in einer anderen

This process, by which languages and worlds collide and fuse will be examined in the next chapters, but for now, in the narrative, world-views cannot enter into contact with each other yet, and this inability precisely is the stated purpose of the confusion: “that they may not understand one another’s speech.” The linguistic transformation thus could be summarized, in technical language, as follows: before the confusion, the language pool of mankind, that is, the set of all the signs composing man’s language, was equal to the pool formed by the Adamic language. Following the confusion, the language of mankind has known a considerable growth, with the creation of 71 other pools, while the Adamic one remained mostly intact. The language pool of mankind is now composed of 72 subsets not interacting with each other at this point, something which implies that there is no overlap between the pools.

Speakers of the new languages have no memory of being speakers of the language of Adam, and this language is now unintelligible to them, as are all other languages. This transformation can be visualized as a growing tree, whose stem is the Adamic language, and whose peripheral branches are the newly grown languages. This world-tree represents the $\Phi\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma\iota\varsigma$ of the meta- $\Phi\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma\iota\varsigma$, the growth of the world(s) formed by the different houses of being. This tree only now begins to branch, but it will continue to grow, with these branches growing stronger and more distant from one another, allowing the world to cover a greater surface and to cast a larger shadow. The rest of the meta-narrative will also tell the (hi)story of this world-tree.



Fig. 10 *The young tree*. The world-tree was planted

Sprache bietet, von sich aus zu verstehen und zu erfassen.” From: Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gesammelte Werke: Band 1: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. A. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010: 451–452. Print.

in Eden, at the dawn of time, but only after its stem has grown out of the soil and been strengthened by the passing of the seasons and the work of the skies can the tree finally let its branches come out, so as to occupy a greater portion of the heavens and receive more light and warmth from the sun.

In the preceding pages, our attention has been focused on the most obvious aspect of the event of Babel. The confusion of tongues is indeed mostly seen as the emergence of a plurality of languages. Here, however, it will be argued that the emergence of a plurality of language hides a less noticeable event that is of no less importance for the development of man's language and the nurturing of his relation to being in the meta-narrative: the emergence of a village of tongues.

3.2.8 Emergence: the village of tongues

*Drąsiai, aukštai
Pakils balsai:
Išauš kita gadynė!
Užgims darbai,
Prašvis laikai.
Pakils jauna tėvynė!
Aušra naujos gadynės teka:
Nušvis ir saulės spinduliai;
Juk nujautimas širdžiai šneka
Taip aiškiai, linksmai ir
saldžiai.*

Bold, High
The voices rise:
Bringing another era!
Giving birth to works
Illuminating the times
Rises the young homeland!
The dawn of a new era is
flowing:
And the sun's rays are
shining;
A premonition speaking
heartily,
So clear, joyful, and sweet.

— Maironis ⁷⁵

In order to perceive what is at stake during the confusion of

⁷⁵ TBA. Maironis. "Pavasario balsai." *Lietuvių klasikinės literatūros antologija*. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.

tongues, beyond it simply marking the appearance of new languages, one must first examine what its purpose is rather than its direct effects. The stated purpose of the confusion: “that they may not understand one another’s speech,” offers us a clear view of what is at stake during this event, a view that has nonetheless been largely ignored by hermeneuts. In order to properly see what this sentence means, we must first allow ourselves to take a small detour, to pry into the essence of language, as it will be the key unlocking a deeper meaning of the event of Babel.

One of the clearest and most straightforward insights into the essence of language, relevant to the present matter, is given to us by Heidegger and can be found in its *Zollikon Seminar*: “To say something as this or that (so and so) is ἀποφαίνεσθαι, a showing of the subject matter by itself. The proper essence [Wesen] of language consists of such saying or showing.”⁷⁶ Language shows, it unconceals things to the persons dwelling in this language, this house of being. As it was said earlier, to unconceal is to make intelligible, to make man see a vision of the universe by transforming it from a continuous but unintelligible unity to a discontinuous but intelligible set of “things” in relation with each other. The essence of language is thus to give man a vision of the universe and of its Φύσις so as to make them intelligible. This is the essence of language, but as it unconceals, language also has the peculiarity of concealing itself.

Language is a “clearing” (*Lichtung*), something that unconceals some things, while concealing others and itself. The clearing, like a clearing in the woods, is a place that opens up a space, where things can be seen as it lets light shine in its midst. Doing this nonetheless also implies a concealment, as explained in the *Basic questions of philosophy*:

If we stand in a clearing in the woods, we see only what

⁷⁶ For reasons of coherence, the translation has been slightly modified, changing the translation of the German word “Wesen”, from “nature” to “essence.” Translation from: Heidegger, Martin, and Medard Boss. *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols, Conversations, Letters*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001: 142. Print; Original German: “Etwas als etwas so und so sagen, ist ein ἀποφαίνεσθαι, ein Sich-zum-zeigen-bringen der Sache. Das eigentliche Wesen der Sprache ist solches Sagen oder Zeigen.” From: Heidegger, Martin. *Zollikoner Seminare: Protokolle — Zwiegespräche — Briefe*. V. Klostermann, 2006: 185. Print.

can be found within it: the free place, the trees about — and precisely not the luminosity of the clearing itself. As little as the openness is simply the unconcealedness of beings, but is the clearing *for* the self-concealing, so little is this self-concealment a mere being-absent. It is rather a vacillating, hesitant refusal”⁷⁷

The clearing therefore operates its self-concealment, but it also can further conceal something else: what falls beyond the clearing. If a man walks in a dense and dark forest, his surroundings will be largely concealed by the absence of light. He will nonetheless have a limited vision of his environment, allowing him to continue on his path. Reaching a clearing, the man is bathed in the light coming from the sun that is now visible in the clear sky. The content of the clearing is also now perfectly visible: the clearing unconceals what it contains. The dazzling light of the clearing nonetheless further conceals the inside of the forest, which now becomes completely invisible. The clearing conceals what man could see of the forest, and it even can conceal its own existence. A man living in the clearing, never having set foot in the forest, might not even notice that something exists beyond his well-lit dwelling. The clearing unconceals things, but it conceals itself and what lies beyond it. Language is very similar to such a clearing. It makes part of the universe intelligible, but it also conceals its own work, its own effect, and even what intelligibility is. Without any contrasting element, language conceals itself and the fact that things can lie beyond what it makes intelligible. The essence of language is thus both to unconceal and to conceal. It makes intelligible things but renders unintelligible others.

With this in mind, we can return to the purpose of the confusion: “that they may not understand one another’s speech,” says the Deity. The confusion does not take back language from man. It does not cancel the intelligibility that he has of his environment, but it rather brings non-intelligibility into his world. This event

⁷⁷ Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected “Problems” of “Logic.”* Indiana University Press, 1994: 178. Print; Original German: “wir z. B. in einer Waldlichtung stehend oder auf sie stoßend nur das sehen, was in ihr vorfindlich ist: der freie Platz, die umstehenden Bäume — und gerade nicht das Lichte der Lichtung selbst Sowenig die Offenheit nur einfach Unverborgenheit des Seienden ist, sondern Lichtung für das Sichverbergen, sowenig ist dieses Sichverbergen ein bloßes Abwesendsein, sondern zögernde Versagung.” From: GA 45:210–211.

may not be meant to be a reprisal, a punishment that takes something from man in order to impede his capacity to communicate with his fellow men. The confusion may not be meant to make the men of Babel less than their forefathers, but rather meant to make them have something that their ancestors did not have. It may be meant to be thought positively: it gives them un-intelligibility, without taking back intelligibility, and this gift is a stepping stone for man's progress toward his destiny. The emergence of languages is an important event, but mainly as a preparation for the future of mankind. For the men of Babel, the confusion foremost marks another emergence, the appearance of a contrasting element to the essence of language: the un-intelligible.

The un-intelligible languages that man will encounter are not completely concealed: for him, they are not mere noise, nor similar to the sounds produced by animals or his environment. One thing is intelligible about them: they are language. They produce a contrast with his own intelligible language. This contrast is not the "opposite" of language or speech; it is not "silence" nor concealment but rather represents the non-essence of language. The essence of language is intelligibility and its non-essence is unintelligibility, but what is this so-called "non-essence"? The Badian philosopher explains this concept as follows, taking the example of the non-essence of truth as unconcealment, which can be paralleled with the question of the non-essence of language:

The proper non-essence of truth is the mystery. Here non-essence does not yet have the sense of inferiority to essence in the sense of what is general (χολινόν. γένος), its *possibility* and the ground of its possibility. Non-essence is here what in such a sense would be a pre-essential essence. But "nonessence" means at first and for the most part the deformation of that already inferior essence. Indeed, in each of these significations the non-essence remains always in its own way essential to the essence and never becomes unessential in the sense of irrelevant.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Heidegger, Martin. *Pathmarks*. Cambridge University Press, 1998: 148. Print; Original German: "Das eigentliche Un-wesen der Wahrheit ist das Geheimnis. Un-wesen bedeutet hier noch nicht abgefallen zum Wesen im Sinne des Allgemeinen (χολινόν. γένος), seiner possibilitas (Ermöglichung) und ihres Grundes. Un-wesen ist hier das in solchem Sinne vor-wesende Wesen.

The non-essence is an inferior essence in the sense that it preserves the essence in itself but denies it. In the case of language, this means that the non-essence of language, the unintelligible, still preserves the essence of language: it is potentially intelligible; it is a language in the full sense of the word and not a meaningless noise. It preserves it, but nonetheless denies it: it is a meaningful language, whose meaning is denied, rendered unintelligible. The non-essence reveals itself to be a preservation and a denial of the essence. The non-essence of language reveals itself as preserving the essence of language: it is identifiable as potentially intelligible, meaningful, but it nonetheless remains unintelligible.

Furthermore, the non-essence is also a *de-formation*, in the sense that it can break the yoke of an overwhelming essence. Man is indeed formed by language, through its essence, that is, through its intelligibility. As it was seen earlier, this “formation” can blind man to its own effect on him, and render him unable to perceive the limitations of both his language and himself. The non-essence is like the broken jug, whose broken nature fractures the everydayness of its use, and its readiness-to-hand. Thus, the non-essence is not “non-essential” in the sense of “superfluous” or “of little use.” On the contrary, the non-essence is necessary in order for the essence to be clearly seen. The broken jug is a de-formed jug, but it is not a useless jug. It cannot be used to pour liquid, but it nonetheless can show the nature of the jug, its “jugness.”

The essence of language is to be a self-concealing unconcealment. It reveals things while hiding itself. It reveals what is in the clearing it opens, but further conceals what lies beyond it. The non-essence, on the other hand, is also an unconcealment, but one of a different nature: it unconceals the existence of a world beyond the clearing. It breaks the blindness that leads man to think that the clearing is all that there is. The non-essence, in itself, does not give man a complete view of his own facticity, but it does bring a contrast. In the present case, for example, the emergence of the non-essence of language does not unconceal the nature of the clearing, nor the light itself (as a source of vision), but the unintelligible nevertheless unconceals the fact that other languages

»Unwesen« besagt aber zunächst und zumeist die Verunstaltung jenes bereits ab-gefallenen Wesens. Das Un-wesen bleibt allerdings in jeder dieser Bedeutungen je in seiner Weise dem Wesen wesentlich und wird niemals unwesentlich im Sinne des Gleichgültigen.” From: GA 9: 194.

are possible, and that the language that man speaks is not “natural” to mankind. The other languages are not intelligible, but the conscience of their mere existence can give man a sight of what lies beyond his house of being: not only that something more is possible, but also that his language, that is, his own dwelling, is shaping him. It gives him the ability to be, but it also constrains him, in ways he has yet to fully perceive.

The non-essence of language thus complements the un-concealment brought on by the essence. The two nonetheless do not stand as equals, as mere opposites. The essence is the positive, what is set forth, installed, whereas the non-essence is the denial of the essence, its removal. This idea is explained by Heidegger, not directly concerning language, but rather concerning the relation between “rising” (*Aufgehen*), as a positive element, and “setting” (*Untergehen*), as a negative one, in an interpretation of the 16th fragment of Heraclitus: τὸ μὴ δῶνόν ποτε πῶς ἄν τις λάθοι,⁷⁹ “How can one hide from that which never sets?”⁸⁰ He notes that:

Everywhere, the positive precedes the negative. Not only in the domain of affirmations and negations, but rather in all “determinations.” How could there be a negation if nothing was first determined/defined, that is, if there was no *positum*, a positive that can be denied and “taken away” by a negation. With only the “taking away,” no beginning is possible.⁸¹

If the non-essence of language is the denial of its essence, that is, the denial of intelligibility, the essence must then have precedence over the non-essence: intelligibility must precede unintelligibility. The intelligible must have been set forth before the appearance of the un-intelligible, as without it, there is nothing, no “things,” but rather only the continuous oneness of the Φύσις. Without

⁷⁹ GA 55:44.

⁸⁰ Hippocrates, and Heracleitus. *Hippocrates, Volume IV: Nature of Man*. Trans. W. H. S. Jones. London; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931: 479. Print.

⁸¹ TBA. Original German: “Überall geht das Positive dem Negativen voran, nicht etwa nur in der Ordnung des Bejahens und Ver-neinens, sondern in allem >Setzen< überhaupt. Wie sollte je eine Ver-nehmung sein können, wenn nicht zuvor etwas gesetzt wäre, also ein positum und ein Positives, das sie, die Vernehmung, dann weg- und absetzt. Mit dem Ab-setzen allein gibt es keinen Beginn.” From: GA 55: 155.

the intelligible, the un-intelligible cannot *be* and even less be recognized as unintelligible. On the other hand, the intelligible can emerge without the unintelligible. The essence can arise, and even must arise, before the un-essence,⁸² making the un-essence somewhat “unessential” (*Unwesentlich*) in the sense that it is not a prerequisite. Without it, the essence is nonetheless still somewhat deficient, as the absence of contrast conceals it. The relation between the intelligible and the un-intelligible is therefore not to be thought of as an opposition between equals, but rather as an unequal complementarity.

The emergence of the un-essence of language is, at first, very unsettling for man, as it shakes the basis of his own being, and it can appear to threaten his dwelling and the world that it contains: “The un-essence of language can in this way be taken up as a danger and as resistance, as something that compels a constantly new assertion of the essence against the un-essence.”⁸³ This unnerving experience is only the first effect of the emergence of the un-essence of language. The perceived danger paves the way for a strife, which will be a source of unconcealment.

Before examining the strife and its outcome, it is also important to note that the emergence of the unintelligible occurs in two distinct forms. The separation of mankind into 72 peoples is indeed accompanied by another distinction: one of these peoples will conserve the *lingua adamica*, and the tradition formed from the time of Eden, while all the others are given new languages.

For the **custodians** of the Adamic tradition, the unintelligible appears as an outlying emergence: man is not thrown into the

⁸² It should nonetheless be noted that the un-essence is not simply what is not the essence, that is, a non-essence. It rather represents the denial of this essence. For example, the un-intelligible is not the non-intelligible, as in the case of the former, the intelligibility is possible but merely denied, whereas in the latter it is simply impossible: there is no thing that could become intelligible.

⁸³ The translation (Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin's Hymns “Germania” and “The Rhine.”* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014: 60. Print.) has been modified, changing the translation of the word “Unwesen” from “corrupted essence” to the more literal “un-essence,” as it better reflects the original meaning in the context in which it is mentioned here. Original German: “Das Unwesen der Sprache kann so als Gefahr und Widerstand ergriffen werden, als Zwang zur ständig neuen Bewährung des Wesens gegen das Unwesen.” From: GA 69: 64.

emerging environment. The new languages are kept distant from him, and they are indecipherable. The members of this people are immersed in the same facticity as the one in which they were before the confusion, but something foreign has been brought to their horizon, something perceivable but non-accessible, as man is at this point unable to render the other language(s) intelligible. As custodians, they may appear privileged, as if they were spared from the consequences of the confusion. But nothing indicates that these men were placed in this position because of their own merit or virtue. Furthermore, the custody of the first language is not inherently more enviable than the building of the new ones: the two groups are not hierarchized, and the separation rather only constitutes a preliminary set-up laying the groundwork for the future development of mankind's relation with its essential being. The Adamic tradition is not kept as an idol to the past, nor does it mark an inherent superiority of what is the most ancient. It is kept for a precise purpose, which will be unveiled only at a later point of the meta-narrative.

The other peoples, on the other hand, are thrown into a completely new facticity. Their former language becomes unintelligible, similar to the other 70 languages by its mysteriousness. The Adamic tradition may be forgotten by them, but one thing may have remained: the consciousness of the fact that the language left at Babel was not just like any other. It was their home, the first house that opened up the possibility for man to be human, forming a continuous tradition built by all the descendants of Adam and flowing on the earth like a river running across the land, under the skies. The peoples have seen new brooks that start to flow throughout the earth to quench their thirst, but the first river nonetheless conserves a special status: it is the only one that can be traced back to the source of man's being, following his (hi)story starting with the advent of language in the garden. For the men exiled from Babel, the Adamic house of being may be unintelligible, but it still is recognizable as a *home* and as the source of a longing. Now that the emerging element brought by the confusion has been identified, its effects and purpose can now be unveiled.

3.2.9 Unconcealment: an encounter with the un-intelligible

The heart of the event of Babel may not be the scattering of the people, and not even the emergence of a plurality of languages. It will be here argued that the cornerstone of the Babel narrative may be something that is only hinted at, left for us to unveil. This piece is the encounter with the unintelligible, that is, the fact that each one of the 72 peoples on earth will be confronted with something new, something never experienced before: to be face to face with someone, speaking to him, without being able to communicate, only hearing an unintelligible speech. This event is not directly recounted, but nevertheless certain: each one of the scattered people will encounter another, after an indeterminate period of time. Such an encounter may appear insignificant compared to the giant scale of the narrative, which aims at encompassing the (hi)story of the creation from its beginning until its end. The following pages will nonetheless attempt to show what a profound and decisive event it represents for man as an “ontological being,” that is, a creature concerned with its own being. This event will represent a second *ek-stasis* for the men of the narrative, one which will be a direct result of the confusion of tongues. It will be first examined from the perspective of the “custodians” of the Adamic tradition. Later, the peculiarities of the other point of view, the one of the “pioneers” who are given new languages and are building new traditions, will also be scrutinized.

3.2.9.1 The encounter as experienced by the custodians

For the men set apart as keepers of the heritage of Adam and of his descendants, the confusion of tongues does not seem to radically change their world at first: they become a small group among a larger humanity, and they stop their construction projects, but their language and their world both appear unchanged. The separation from the other peoples may bring them a certain sense of identity, and perhaps even an impression of superiority over the others, as *they* alone have the privilege of conserving the language once common to mankind as a whole. Like all the other peoples of the earth, they will nonetheless experience the encounter with the unintelligible, with the foreign, an encounter that may uncon-

ceal a new portion of their path toward their essential being. This nonetheless will only occur if they choose to see it.

The encounter takes place between the intelligible, that is, the essence of the language that they inhabit, and the unintelligible, that is, the languages that are inaccessible to them, and which are distant houses of being. The ability to recognize the encountered peoples as fellow human beings is contrasted with the inability to communicate with them, reducing them to mere animals, creatures without language. Men are thus faced with two types of persons: the ones with whom they share the same house of being, and the ones with whom they do not, and whose dwelling remains locked to them. This experience is not fruitless, and it brings a precious insight that will be best described under the light of the teachings of Heraclitus, and their interpretation by Heidegger.

The encounter between essence and non-essence induces a tension between the two, a strife that is not to be thought negatively as a destructive conflict between opposites, but rather as a positive struggle, a work produced by the action of counter-acting forces. This is expressed by Heraclitus, in his usual cryptic language, in the 51st fragment as interpreted by Heidegger: καὶ ὅτι τοῦτο οὐκ ἴσασι πάντες οὐδὲ ὁμολογοῦσιν, ἐπιμέμφεται ὧδέ τως,⁸⁴ “humans do not understand how the One holds itself together by way of counter-striving.”⁸⁵ The essence needs to be in strife with its non-essence in order to hold itself together, in order to truly *be*.

The birthplace of Heraclitus may have helped to reveal this fact through metaphors: he was a native of Ephesus, a city which was devoted to the cult of Artemis⁸⁶ (Ἄρτεμις) up until the apos-

⁸⁴ Hippocrates, and Heraclitus. *Hippocrates, Volume IV: Nature of Man*. Trans. W. H. S. Jones. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931: 470. Print.

⁸⁵ Heidegger, Martin, and Richard Rojcewicz. *Basic Concepts of Ancient Philosophy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007: 183. Print. German text: “Die Menschen »verstehen nicht, wie das Eine auseinanderstrebend ineinandergeht»” GA 22: 232.

⁸⁶ Concerning Artemis: “According to Greek mythology, Artemis, one of the more popular Greek deities, was the twin sister of Apollo. Born on the island of Delos (or on the nearby island of Ortygia, according to some traditions), Artemis was the daughter of Zeus and Leto. Traditionally, she was the virgin goddess of the hunt, the protector of the young of all wild animals, and a goddess of human childbirth. Various animals were often associated with Artemis, including lions, bulls, rams, deer, and bees. In some locales, Artemis assumed

tolic period, as recounted in the book of Acts.⁸⁷ Artemis is described as being equipped with a bow and a lyre, two objects from which the nature of the strife can be unveiled. Heidegger thus explains:

‘... whatever is by itself at variance is nevertheless in agreement with itself; counter-striving harmony it is, as with the bow and the lyre’ [where the ends that stretch apart are tensed together, a tension which, however, first makes possible precisely the release of the arrow and the resonance of the strings, that is: being]⁸⁸

The interpretation is focused on the question of being, but the phenomenon at work here is not restricted to it. The harmony (as *Einklang*, ἀρμονία, or unison), is not “merely superficial agreement that exists temporarily and remains without force,”⁸⁹ but rather almost the opposite: “whatever is most intensely counter-striving

the characteristics of a mother-goddess and was associated with fertility. The Romans identified Artemis with the goddess Diana. Although she was worshipped throughout Asia Minor, Greece, Syria, and even in Rome, Ephesus was one of the major centers in the ancient world for her cult. As early as the eighth century B.C.E., a small temple to Artemis existed at Ephesus. In the late seventh or early sixth century, this temple was replaced with another temple. Around the middle of the sixth century B.C.E., a monumental marble temple was built at Ephesus for the worship of Artemis, which was destroyed by a disastrous fire in the fourth century b.c.E. Rebuilt a few decades later, this temple continued to be a center for the Artemis cult until it was abandoned sometime after the fourth century C.E., partially due to the growth of Christianity in Ephesus. The temple of Artemis (or, the Artemision), known as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, drew visitors from throughout the Mediterranean world who came to offer sacrifices and bring gifts to Artemis.” From: Fant, Clyde E., and Mitchell G. Reddish. *Lost Treasures of the Bible: Understanding the Bible Through Archaeological Artifacts in World Museums*. Wm. B. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2008: 354. Print.

⁸⁷ Acts 19.

⁸⁸ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine."* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014: 111. Print; Original German: “»Nicht verstehen sie [nämlich die alltäglich so in ihrem Dasein Dahintreibenden], daß und wie jenes, was für sich auseinandersteht, doch in sich übereinkommt; gegenstrebigter Einklang ist das, wie beim Bogen und der Leier« [wo die auseinanderstrebenden Enden zusammengespannt sind, welche Spannung aber gerade den Abschluß des Pfeils und den Klang der Saiten erst ermöglicht, das heißt: das Seyn].” From: GA 39: 124.

⁸⁹ Ibid.^t: 111; Original German: “Wo der alltägliche Verstand Einklang sieht, ist es nur äußerliches Übereinstimmen, das zeitweilig besteht und kraftlos bleibt.” From GA 39: 124.

is fundamentally the harmony of whatever belongs together.”⁹⁰ The tension provided by the string pushes the ends of the bow apart but also pulls them together.⁹¹ The harmony, allowing the object to release arrows, is created by the strife of these two complementary forces: the strife not only does not destruct, it creates. It opens up new possibilities: the propulsion of a projectile for the bow, and musical notes for the lyre. The essence of the strife thus is a harmony, as produced by a tension between forces, which unites together by keeping apart, or as said by Heraclitus: *εν διαφερον εαυτω*, the One differentiated in itself.⁹²



Fig. 11 *Tension and contrast*. Harmony only emerges when there is a strife between opposite forces. Contrary to our intuition, harmony is thus contrary to uniformity: a black or a white canvas, or a time of absolute silence, do not light the heart of man on fire as a masterful artwork does. It is when the artist skillfully plays with opposites that something more can emerge, something that is more than black and white paint or a random sound. Within the house of being, with the chisel in his hand that allows him to create, man can play with the contraries, so as to open up his dwelling towards the skies, and be ready to receive the fire from heaven.

⁹⁰ Ibid.^t: 111; Original German: “das zuhöchst Widerstrebende im Grunde der Einklang des Zusammengehörigen ist.” From GA 39: 124.

⁹¹ GA 55:152: “Zum Wesen des Bogens gehört, daß die Enden sich zwar auseinanderspannen, aber zugleich auch in diesem Auseinanderstreben zueinander zurückgespannt sind.”

⁹² From GA 55: 31. Tertiary quote: Heidegger quoting Hölderlin, quoting Heraclitus.

The encounter between the intelligible and the unintelligible that follows the confusion of tongues can become the source such a strife in which language is confronted to its non-essence. Such a strife, however, will only be true to its nature through a bridging, that is, through an act of will of man, who decides to set up the conditions for the strife. The beginning of the bridging of the stat-ions occurs when man accepts to play the role of the string of the bow or the lyre: when he realizes that he is the one who can put both ends, the intelligible and the unintelligible, in tension. Without man linking them, the two are naturally separated, even repulsing each other: they are unrelated, not even opposites.

Man can nonetheless put the stat-ions in tension, acting as a string counter-acting the force pushing them away by pulling them together. Such a tension occurs when man tries to put the intelligible and its non-essence in relation with each other, by pondering them. Through this, man may notice the similarities between the intelligible and the non-intelligible: for example, the fact that the other man's intelligible is his own unintelligible and vice versa, thereby showing him that the essence and the non-essence share something in common, even though at this point he does not see what that is. The tension is harmony (αρμονία) between essence and non-essence: "Not the domain of what rings and resounds, but rather the αρμός, the jointure [die Fuge], the one that fits into another, where both are joined into the jointure, so that joining [Fügung] occurs."⁹³ Both elements are joined together in a strife. This strife, however, remains concealed: a tensed string shows no sign of tension by itself. It is a harmony that does not show itself (αρμονία ἀφανής), something that is mentioned by Heraclitus in the 53rd fragment: ἀρμονία ἀφανής φανερός κρείττων,⁹⁴ "the harmony that does not show itself is more powerful than the one that does."⁹⁵ The concealed harmony is a perfect equilibrium that brings the essence and the non-essence together as a harmonious One, which nonetheless is divided through a quiet strife. The fact that it does not show itself makes this harmony invisible to man, who perceives everything through contrast. Nevertheless, as man

⁹³ TBA. Original German: "nicht der Bereich des Klingens und Tönens, sondern der αρμός, die Fuge, dasjenige, wobei eines in ein anderes sich einpaßt, wo beides in die Fuge sich fügt, so daß Fügung ist." From: GA 55:141.

⁹⁴ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine."* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014: 111. Print.

⁹⁵ TBA.

is the one through which the tension is created, he has the power to act on it so as to let the strife appear.

The quiet harmony of the tensed string can nevertheless be perturbed by man, simply by plucking it like a lyre. The plucked string reveals the strife, and the tension then becomes apparent, as the two forces at play counter-act each other, still harmoniously but, in this case, the strife is neither quiet nor invisible. What does the plucking represent for the tension between language and its non-essence that follows the confusion of tongues? The plucking of the string occurs when man focuses his attention on the nature of his language, seeing it not only as ready-to-hand but also in its presence-at-hand. It occurs when he sees the sign-blocks of the house not only as windows showing him the universe but also as "things" in themselves. This is allowed by the tension produced when his intelligible language is put in relation with the unintelligible. Before the tension, the content of his language was only like a ready-to-hand object, an invisible part of his facticity. When he is confronted with the unintelligible language, he is forced to see the unknown as present-at-hand, because the fact that it is unintelligible renders impossible any ready-to-hand use of this mysterious tongue.

Seeing the unintelligible linguistic content as present-at-hand gives him a new insight concerning the nature of sounds, words, and sentences. Concealing the meaning of signs, the un-intelligible language may help him reveal their nature. After this occurs, man will naturally try to apply the insight brought by the vision of the unintelligible linguistic content to the intelligible content: he may attempt to see the sentences that he utters as present-at-hand, and not only as ready-to-hand. The focus on the intelligible, his language, is like the pulling of the string, which unbalances the two forces by an act of will, as the intelligible content has more weight, being both present-at-hand and ready-to-hand. The release of the string represents the release of the particular attention given to the intelligible: man can now attempt to discern the fundamental difference between the intelligible and the unintelligible, shifting his intentionality back and forth from the two ends of the instrument, making the strife of the two visible, like the vibrations of a string. This movement of intentionality, resembling a gestalt switch, induces something more than the visibility of the strife: it brings an unconcealment, something never experienced before,

just like the first sound emitted by the plucking of a lyre.

When the *ek-stasis* caused by the encounter with the unintelligible is embraced by man through a bridging of the stations, what is unconcealed is more than the presence-at-hand of his speech, of the particular linguistic content that he uses, or, in Saussurian terms: of his *langue*. The back and forth reflection between the intelligible content and the unintelligible one, like a gestalt switch, can allow man to see the gap that separates the two, and what unites them. From the strife of essence and non-essence, man can gain a first glimpse of their union, of what they both share: they are *langage*. Before the encounter, man would only *use* speech as a tool, an easily overlooked part of his facticity. With the tension, however, he now has the opportunity to see his speech, his *langue*, as present-at-hand. He may now discover the presence-at-hand of the sign-blocks composing his own house and the presence-at-hand of the unintelligible sign-blocks from which the foreign house he encountered is built.

The wave produced by the plucking resounds in the mind of man, and it makes him see the *langage* beyond the *langue*. This event is an event of appropriation, whereby man can make language his own, so that he may be master of language as much as language is master over him. To see what language *is* is the first step in this appropriation. It represents a sort of Copernican revolution by which what were once signifiers now become signifieds. More than this: language itself becomes a signified within the house. This sign, however, is not yet the “house of being” represented within itself, as it for now is only visible as an abstract idea, the metaphysical concept of “language” in general, rather than the house that open man’s world.⁹⁶ The house of being is now more than a ready-to-hand dwelling. It is not only a transparent window to the universe, a means to perceive the Φύσις, but it is also is a visible abode: the house itself becomes apparent, at least in its overall external appearance, even if it not recognized as a “house of being” yet, and rather only seen as a purely worldly

⁹⁶ The appearance of the house of being within itself, as such rather than as “language,” will only come later in the chronology of the narrative. This appearance was the subject of the first chapter of the present work: the emergence of the house within the house is the *ek-stasis* that opened the doorway to the meta-narrative. Man’s discovery of the concept of “language” constitutes a first step toward the unveiling of language as the house of being.

idea.

The *ek-stasis* caused by the encounter with the unintelligible can thus reveal the existence of the house of being to man. Its nature as a “house of being”, and its meta-physical architecture, nonetheless remain concealed to him. Furthermore, he cannot yet notice the influence of the peculiarities of the house on his facticity, as no contrasting element is visible: the other houses are unintelligible, and their architectures are therefore invisible to him. The existence of the house is unveiled, but its nature and inner architecture both remain concealed. At a later point, man may become able to perceive the fullness of his meta-physical facticity. This time, however, has yet to come.

The unconcealment brought on by the *ek-stasis* is nonetheless not limited to language. More exactly, by unconcealing language, the *ek-stasis* affects more than man’s linguistic capabilities. The sin of the builders of Babel was not only to have forgotten the Deity but also to have attempted to take its place, seeing themselves as without limits, without boundaries, and able to fulfill any of their ambitions. This transgression seems attributed to the ill effects of the unity of mankind by the Deity itself, as one people speaking one language, leading it to break this unity by confusing the tongues and scattering the people across all the earth. This event has traditionally been seen as a punishment for the sins of men, and a stumbling block on the path of their ambitions. The meta-narrative proposed in this chapter advocates for an alternative reading of the confusion of tongues, seeing it not as a mere punishment, nor as a bridle put on ambitious and blasphemous men, but rather as a guidance giving them the opportunity to see the source of their transgression.

Man’s sins find their source in a blindness, the *lethe* of his own place in the universe. In the present case, he saw himself as without limits because all that could be brought to his world, through language, was intelligible to him. The encounter with the unintelligible and the subsequent unconcealment of language that comes as a consequence of the confusion can also be thought of as a way for man to perceive his own limitations, by facing the unintelligible. By witnessing the existence of other houses of being, man is given an occasion to witness the existence of other worlds, opened by other houses, even though he cannot access them yet.

He can thereby see that *his* world is not *the* world, and that it is only a representation of the universe rather than an objective truth. Seeing the unintelligible thus shows man the source of his transgression, and it shows him his limitations as well: that he is neither creator nor master over the creation, and that the Deity is the master of all beings. The confusion teaches him the fear of the Deity, which is called the beginning of wisdom or knowledge several times in the Scriptures.⁹⁷

The sight of language given by the *ek-stasis* can also be seen as opening up the possibility of a metamorphosis of man's relation with his dwelling: by seeing language inside his house of being, man may begin to gain an awareness of his own linguistic facticity, an awareness of the fact that language provides the conditions for him to be a human being, something that represents the first step in a journey that may one day lead him to see language as the "house of being" rather than as mere language. As a result of this newfound awareness, he may see his language under a new light, and strive to make his speech reflect the depth of its nature: not indulging himself in *idle talk* (*Rede*), but instead making each one of his utterances a true *saying* (*Sage*), that is, a *poiesis* bringing the Φύσις into words, into man's world, words deeply grounded into the earth, into the truth of the phenomenon.

The *ek-stasis* thus lays two paths in front of man, and he is free to choose which one he will take. The first is the bridging, which was described in the previous pages: a path leading to an increased awareness of the nature of the universe in which he is thrown, and leading him to a metamorphosis into an "ontological" being. The other path is the leaping, which can be chosen without seeing what it entails. On this path, man is also *given sight* of the other houses of being, but he does not *look* at them, that is, does not identify them as dwellings like the one that he dwells in. The existence of these houses is then considered to merely be a background noise associated with creatures that do not "possess" language, mere animals. No tension is thus created between the essence and non-essence of language, and therefore no unconcealment occurs, as the non-intelligible is not identified as being related to the intelligible. The speech produced by the other peoples is not even identified as being non-intelligible, because the privative prefix in this term

⁹⁷ Pro 9:10; Pro 1:7; Psa 111:10.

presupposes a relation. For them, it is simply noise, as only *they* possess language. Unable to perceive their house of being and the facticity it induces, the leaping men thus remain in the same mindset that led to the construction of Babel: their own language, tradition, and metaphysics are perceived by them to be natural, universal among “true” humans, and the only possible ones. They not only remain affected by the blindness of the men of Shinar, thinking themselves as without limits, masters over themselves and over all creation, but they are also at risk of aggravating it.

Indeed, the fact that the custodians have been set apart from the other peoples may lead those who leap to consider themselves as inherently superior to those who have not been entrusted with the custody, as they alone received the inheritance of their common ancestors. The Adamic language would then be in danger of being wrongly sacralized, put above the others, becoming itself an idol. Like the “idols of the marketplace” (*idola fori*) of Francis Bacon,⁹⁸ the language of Adam could be seen as perfect, as allowing flawless representations of the universe, leading man to see the representation as more important than the represented, that is, to think that the world would be equivalent to the universe as a whole. This would represent a cutting off of the world from its earthly roots, a separation from the phenomenon. Considered perfect, the “possession” of the Adamic language and of the world it opened up by the members of this people would seem to render futile any attempt to continue the building of a world more deeply grounded in the earth, a better world, or its extension.

Leaping would therefore induce a spiritual lethargy, with men giving up on any strife for spiritual progress because they would already have been chosen and set above other peoples, dwelling in a house of being whose perfection would grant them all the knowledge they would need. The Adamic language might even become the object of a cult: not only be a metaphorical idol like the *idola fori*, but a real idol, with words and names placed higher than what they represent, and men killed for uttering a holy word, too holy to be spoken by those deemed unworthy of its sanctity.

The leaping custodian is thus in danger of falling even deeper than his forefathers. His leap makes him miss the transformation experienced by the man who bridges the stations: he remains an

⁹⁸ See § 3.2.2.

ontic being, someone who is blind to his facticity and who is unable to see the house of being that he inhabits, as he is engulfed in the everydayness and readiness-to-hand of language. The destiny of this man is nonetheless never completely sealed beforehand: at each point in time, he has the opportunity to go back to choose the other path, and to join the other men over the bridge, thereby progressing on his walk toward the dis-discovery of his essential being through an appropriation of his language, his dwelling, and through a the realization of the mistake of the men of Shinar.

3.2.9.2 The encounter as experienced by the pioneers

The **pioneers**, that is, the men belonging to the 71 peoples that have been given new languages and new traditions during the confusion of tongues, experience a slightly different *ek-stasis*, as compared to the custodians. The heart of this *ek-stasis*, the encounter with the unintelligible, remains very similar, and it will thus not be re-described further. The major difference between the two categories of men set apart by the confusion is their (hi)storical role: the custodians are guarding the source, the original language, tradition, and world, while the pioneers are set off on a journey, far away from it, so as to clear new parts of the earth, and build new worlds upon them.

The very concise nature of the narrative once again forces us to attempt to fill some missing elements so as to better see the work and purpose of the confusion of tongues. By bestowing new languages to the pioneers, the Deity gives them a basis upon which new worlds can be built. The pioneers will have to continue their edification, through *poiesis* if they root them in their new earth, or through pure imagination if they base them on clouds. Whatever path they choose, the statement of the narrative declaring the inability for the peoples of earth to communicate with each other nonetheless implies one thing: that the pioneers must have lost their ability to speak the Adamic language. It is important to notice that this nevertheless does not imply that they have “forgotten” it altogether. As we have seen, language is not to be considered as a property, or a mere tool that could be used and simply put away, but rather is to be seen as a dwelling. The pioneers have been cast out of the house of being built from the time

of Adam, and they are now in a new dwelling, probably made by their own hands from a divine foundation. Not being able to dwell in the Adamic house does not entail any obliviousness to it. They do not dwell in it, and they are unable to speak and be spoken through the first house, but they may still remember the fact that it was their home, the first dwelling of mankind, a place built by their forefathers. They are now in exile in a new part of the earth, and in a new world, because of their transgression. Far away from it, they may nonetheless still remember it and see the source from whence they came. Their past dwelling now lies far away, but it may still be visible from their new house of being, waiting to be re-dis-covered at a later stage of the meta-narrative.

3.2.9.3 Babel as an exile in preparation for a homecoming

Both custodians and pioneers have been given a specific role to play by the Deity, a role which has yet to be revealed. The separation of the peoples into these two groups lays the groundwork for a future event, but they are each already given a mission to fulfill, both of which will be found necessary for this future event to occur. Although it may appear to be so, the custodians are not given a privilege by conserving the Adamic language, and the exile of the pioneers is not a punishment. This exile will later be found to benefit mankind as a whole. Men will not only benefit from the novelty of the new houses, but also from the distance placed between the pioneers and their original home. The exile will itself resemble an *ek-stasis*, a productive alienation. By setting the pioneers on a journey far away from home, the Deity is thus offering mankind a precious gift, rather than a chastisement. The German professor accurately describes such a phenomenon in his commentary on Hölderlin's *Andenken* ("Remembrance"):

The sojourn in the foreign and the alienation in the foreign must occur so that in the foreign what is one's own can begin to shine. This distant light awakens the distant affection for what is one's own. The hesitation begins. The forbearance becomes strong. Shyness penetrates all behavior. The search for what is one's own has found its basis. It is not a selfish, unbound look

around. The search for what is one's own is appropriated through the shyness before the remoteness of what is one's own. The sea voyage thus falls under the hidden law of the homecoming to what is one's own.⁹⁹

Here may lie the key to the event of Babel: it is a departure to the foreign, which ultimately will lead to an appropriation of the home. Would this then imply that the pioneers are the ones who are privileged? To think this would be to miss the larger picture painted by the narrative, in which, as we shall see, the separation between custodians and pioneers is not to be seen as separating mankind according to their merit or their transgressions, but rather as a necessary step for the accomplishment of man's destiny. The pioneers are sent away from the house of Adam, thereby gaining an external view of it. But the house would not stand if there were no man dwelling in it, thus showing the complementarity of both groups.

Besides the strife of the essence and non-essence of language, the confusion of tongues sets up another tension by giving men a vision of something far away from them. This tension is a *Fernweh* for the custodians, that is, a longing for the foreign, for what is far away. It is not a sign of boredom nor a desire for escapism: it rather is the sign of the realization that one is called to explore, to expand one's horizon and one's world. For the pioneers, it is a *Heimweh*, a longing for the home: not a homesickness, nor a nost-algy,¹⁰⁰ but rather a desire to return to the source, to what is one's own. This tension is foremost a driving force, leading man to **re-flect**, that is, to look back toward the source while moving forward, away from it. Man is engulfed in the flow of the Φύσις, going forward in time, but he also needs to remember and

⁹⁹ TBA. Original German: "Der Aufenthalt in der Fremde und die Befremdung in der Fremde müssen sein, damit am Fremden das Eigene zu leuchten beginnt. Dieses ferne Leuchten erweckt die entfernte Zuneigung zum Eigenen. Die Zögerung beginnt. Die Langmut wird stark. Die Scheu durchstimmt alles Verhalten. Das Suchen des Eigenen hat seinen Wesensgrund gefunden. Es ist kein eigensüchtiges, ungebundenes Umherspüren. Das Suchen des Eigenen ist durch die Scheu zuvor der Ferne des Eigenen übereignet. Die Meerfahrt steht so unter dem verborgenen Gesetz der Heimkehr ins Eigene." From: GA 52:175–176.

¹⁰⁰ The Ancient Greek word νοσταλγία is a compound word, composed of νόστος, which designates a "homecoming," and of the word ἄλγος, which means "pain." The nostalgia is originally a longing for the home.

to search back for the source, otherwise his world would not grow to be a better representation of the Φύσις, but only a groundless meta-physical construction.

The pioneers are pathfinders, as they explore earth and worlds, and the custodians provide an anchor for them, a lifeline that can allow them to come back to the source after having received the insights of the foreign. The success of this mission is dependent on the will of man, who at every instant is confronted with the choice: either to seize the opportunity by bridging or to let it pass away by leaping. The first choice, the one of *re-flection*, by a being concerned with its being, marks the emergence of a consciousness of his belonging to the Φύσις, of being a part of it and having a part in it, as an actor and not just as a passive onlooker. Man can realize that he is an extension of the Φύσις, like the flow of a river, and if his consciousness is sufficiently clear, he will see himself as belonging to a river that “can never forget the source, because in flowing, that, in issuing from the source, it itself constantly is the source and remains the locality of its own essence.”¹⁰¹ The meaning of the episode of Babel will nonetheless only be revealed in its entirety when the mission given to both custodians and pioneers is fulfilled, something that will only happen much later in the chronology of the narrative. This future event will occur at the same earthly location, which will then be known by another name: Babylon.¹⁰² The narrative will nonetheless first take us to Mount Sinai.

¹⁰¹ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister."* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996: 138. Print; Original German: “Der Strom kann als Strom, d. h. als die Wanderschaft, niemals die Quelle vergessen, weil er strömend, d. h. quellend, selbst ständig die Quelle ist und die Ortschaft seines Wesens bleibt.” From GA 53: 173.

¹⁰² Even though there is no distinction between Babel and Babylon in Hebrew, “Babylon” being the Greek name of “Babel,” the name “Babel” is almost exclusively used to refer to the city at the time of the construction of the tower and the subsequent confusion of tongues. The name “Babylon,” on the other hand, commonly refers to the city during the time of the empire and the captivity.

Chapter 4

The Sinai episode

Centuries after the confusion of tongues and the scattering of Babel's population, according to the biblical timeline, each house of being composing the worldly village has taken root in a different part of the earth. Each house has continued to grow, following the growth of the people it shelters. The custodians remain in charge of the heritage of Adam, while the pioneers explored and conquered the rest of the earth, with each people developing its own peculiarities, its own tradition differentiating it from the others.

At this point in the biblical timeline, the narrative now focuses our attention almost exclusively on the custodians, who are also then known as the Hebrews. The fate of the houses dwelt in by the pioneers will for now be put aside. The third *ek-stasis* of the meta-narrative, the one that will be described here, will nevertheless not only be experienced by the custodians. All the peoples of the village will indeed at some point know its effects. For the most part, this third ek-static experience will be shared by all, and the description given of it by the narrative will thus be generalized to all peoples in the meta-narrative.

The present chapter will therefore describe the Sinai episode, during which the written word makes its first appearance in the narrative. It is also the time when the custodians, the Hebrews, first receive another custody: the custody of the first written law, revealed by the Deity to Moses. The first of these two events does not occupy an important place in the narrative. It will, however, have a significant impact on man's entire world in the meta-

narrative, an impact that will be felt all across the village and profoundly affect it, and so not only during this episode but also during the rest of the meta-narrative as a whole. It will constitute a new station toward which the divinely guided vehicle will be driven: a transition from an exclusively oral language toward one that combines orality and literacy. The nature of the houses of being within the village will thereby be deeply transformed. They will cease to be straw houses that depend on man's constant and unwavering support in order for their walls to stand. They will become solid structures, which will still be affected by the work of time, the effects of the heavens, but significantly less than before. Written language will change the dynamics of the houses, allowing them to be preserved relatively intact, and passed on as inheritance, even if neglected by careless individuals or even entire generations. Their size will also be greatly expanded, changing man's relation to his dwelling, and thus the place of language in his life.

The second event, on the other hand, already constitutes one of the high points of the narrative, one which is still widely known in our modern world. Its effect on the world of the narrative will be equally noticeable. Before this event, divine commands had already been given to man, such as to Adam in the garden, or to Noah following the flood, but men failed to preserve them within the house of being, notably due to their oral nature, which implied the necessity of a permanent and uninterrupted transmission. The commands fell into oblivion, thereby annihilating the chances that future generations would follow them. The written law that will appear here will provide a remedy to this problem, by giving man a law, as an altar carved in the rock, which will become the center point of the house in which it is revealed.

Language is nonetheless only the vehicle taking man on the path, rather than the path itself. The transformation of the houses of being, at the heart of this *ek-stasis*, is only a means aimed at offering man a new, different opportunity to open himself up to his essential being, that is, to realize the nature of his destiny and to accomplish it. The most fundamental effect of the appearance of literacy associated with this *ek-stasis* will be the way it affects man's relation to his own temporality. By making man's world more stable, and making him able to see the unchanged relics of the world of the men who have already been reclaimed by the earth,

literacy will give him an opportunity to see beyond the **presence** (spatial and temporal) of his own existence, to see that the Φύσις and divine being are not limited to this presence, and that past, present, and future form a whole of which he is part. This will give him a new chance to reveal a novel aspect of his own being, and thereby also an aspect of his destiny.

4.1 The narrative of the Sinai episode

A long time has passed since the events of Babel. Joseph, son of Jacob, settled in the land of Egypt with his brothers, and their descendants formed the Israelites. They lived a life of servitude until God liberated them from the yoke of Pharaoh with the help of his servants Moses and Aaron. On their way to the Promised Land, they receive their first written Law. This event ushers a new era in the biblical (hi)story: the age of the written word. This new era nonetheless was not brought on by a single, punctual event: the revealing of the Law and its writing down rather was a long process that took place across decades. The examination of the becoming of the first written law in the following pages will thus be somewhat different than the readings done in the previous chapters. Rather than closely examining a few chapters of a book, we will have to provide a more general overview of the becoming process that mainly takes place in the second half of the book of Exodus (Exo 20–40), and we will also have to ponder the question of the origin of writing itself, about which the Scriptures are silent.

The first direct reference to writing in the narrative occurs in the book of Exodus,¹ soon after Moses led the Israelites out of

¹ In the Septuagint, the first reference to the existence of writing is in Exodus 5:14, when the Israelites are still in Egypt. A verse speaks of γραμματεῖς [grammateís], usually translated as “taskmaster” in the context of this verse, but which literally means “scribe.” It thus appears in the book of Exodus: “So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble for straw. The taskmasters were urgent, saying, ‘Complete your work, your daily task, as when there was straw.’ And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and were asked, ‘Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today, as hitherto?’” (Exo 5:12–14). The RSV-CE translates two different Greek words as “taskmasters.” Only the second occurrence translates a word related to the work of scribes and writing: γραμματεῖς. The other translates an unrelated word: ἐργοδιώκται [ergodiôktai] The original Hebrew word, as given by the

Egypt. On their way to the Promised Land, they are attacked by a desert tribe, the Amalekites. With the help of God and Moses, the Israelites prevail, and God commands Moses to “write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven” (Exo 17:14²). This is the first explicit mention of writing and books.³ It would seem logical to assume that Moses was already literate at the time he was ordered to write what will here be called the “memorial book,” but the text is completely silent concerning the origin of writing among the Hebrews. Before examining the significance of the writing of the memorial book, the problem of the origin of writing within the context of the biblical narrative will thus first be examined.

The rabbinical tradition holds that Abraham wrote religious texts, using them to teach his son Isaac,⁴ but no elements of the narrative support the idea of an ancestral use of the written word. Writing also does not seem to originate among the Hebrews, but rather among Gentiles. Indeed, if this important technique had been invented by the Hebrews or been received as a gift from God, it would seem very unlikely that the narrative would not mention such an important event. Therefore, it may precisely be because of this that no writing is ever mentioned before the memorial book: writing exists, in its true sense, only when God commanded that something be written. In the narrative, writing begins in Sinai. Coming back to the memorial book, which marks the appearance of the written word, the context of its writing can now be examined:

Then came Amalek and fought with Israel at Rephidim.

Masoretic Text, is שֹׁטֵר [šōṭēr], normally simply designating a kind of official distinct from a scribe (which is סוֹפֵר [soṭēr]), but cognates in several other Semitic languages are also directly related to writing: Akkadian [šatāru], Syriac ܫܬܪ [štr], or Arabic سطر [saṭara], all three meaning: “to write.” The word may thus be considered to be a first reference to the existence of writing, but its indirect nature makes it somewhat unsatisfying.

² וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כְּתֹב זֹאת וְקֵרֹן בְּסֵפֶר וְשִׂים בְּאָזְנִי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כִּי־מָחָה: “אֲמַחֶה אֶת־זֵכֶר עַמְלֶק מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם:” (Exo 17:14).

³ The word book סֵפֶר [sēṭēr] does not here refer to a modern bound book, but could potentially represent any written text in the form of a tablet, a papyrus or a scroll.

⁴ See: “וּשְׁתַּל בְּלִבָּם הָעֵיקָר הַגְּדוֹל הַזֶּה וְחָבַר בּו סְפָרִים וְהוֹדִיעוּ לִיצְחָק בְּנוֹ” From: מימון. משה בן. שלמה בן חנוך לוי. משנה תורה הוא היר החזקה. N.p., 1862: 37. Print. (רמב"ם הלכות עבודת כוכבים 1.3)

And Moses said to Joshua, ‘Choose for us men, and go out, fight with Amalek; tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.’ So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses’ hands grew weary; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat upon it, and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; so his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua mowed down Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.’ (Exo 17:8–14⁵)

The last verse, mentioning the purpose of the book, appears to be paradoxical: how can Moses write a book concerning Amalek’s attack against the Israelites, and at the same time the remembrance of Amalek be blotted out? Since the Israelites are later explicitly ordered to “remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt” (Deu 25:17⁶), the most plausible explanation would be that the blotting out would happen at a later point.

The purpose of the book nonetheless seems clear: writing is used so that the treachery of Amalek will not be forgotten. This tribe would later become the arch-enemy of the Hebrews. Haman, the villain of the book of Esther, was the descendant of an Amalekite king, and King Saul was ordered by God to wipe them out of the face of the earth, men, women, children, and cat-

⁵ וַיִּבֶא עַמְלֵק וַיִּלָּחֶם עִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִפְיָדָם׃ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בַּחֲרֵלְלוֹנִי׃ אֲנָשִׁים וְצֹא הִלָּחֶם בְּעַמְלֵק מִחוּר אֲנֹכִי נֹצֵב עַל־רֹאשׁ הַנִּבְעָה וּמִטָּה הָאֱלֹהִים בְּיָדִי׃ וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר־לוֹ מֹשֶׁה לְהִלָּחֶם בְּעַמְלֵק וּמֹשֶׁה אָחֳרָן וְחֹוּר עָלוּ רֹאשׁ הַנִּבְעָה׃ וְהָיָה כַּאֲשֶׁר יָרִים מֹשֶׁה יָדוֹ וְנָבַר יִשְׂרָאֵל וּכַאֲשֶׁר יָנִיחַ יָדוֹ וְנָבַר עַמְלֵק׃ וַיְדִי מֹשֶׁה כַּבָּדִים וַיִּקְחֻ־אֲבָן וַיִּשְׁמִימוּ תַּחְתָּיו וַיָּשָׁב עָלֶיהָ וְאָחֳרָן וְחֹוּר תָּמְכוּ בְּיָדָיו מִזֶּה אַחֵד וּמִזֶּה אַחֵד וַיְהִי יָדָיו אֲמוּנָה עַד־בֹּא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ׃ וַיַּחְלֹשׁ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־עַמְלֵק וְאֶת־עַמּוֹ לַפִּי־חֶרֶב׃ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כָּתֹב זֹאת זִכְרוֹן בַּסֵּפֶר וְשִׂים בְּאָזְנוֹי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כִּי־מָחָה לְפָנֶיךָ׃ (Exo 17:8–15).

⁶ “זָכוֹר אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה לָךְ עַמְלֵק בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּצֹאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם׃” (Deu 25:17).

tle,⁷ but he failed to do so, and he was as a result rejected by God. The fact that this event is the first to be put to writing could be explained by examining the story of one of Amalek's forefathers: Amalek is a descendant of Esau, Jacob's brother.⁸ Jacob took hold of Esau's heel in the womb, prefiguring the taking of his brother's birthright, and Amalek attempted to reverse this situation by striking the Israelites' tail: "Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt, how he attacked you on the way, when you were faint and weary, and cut off at your rear all who lagged behind you; and he did not fear God. (Deu 25:17–18⁹). This cowardly attack, aimed at the weakest elements of a group of slaves in exile, has a particular significance, which may explain why it was chosen to be the first event to be remembered in writing: it is the first encounter between the descendants of Israel¹⁰ and the ones of Esau, between the people of God, and the people he hated.

The exit from Egypt marks the beginning of Israel as a nation aimed toward the Promised Land, which will become theirs. Only three days after their exit did they encounter the Amalekites who will for generations deny their right to the land. The memorial

⁷ 1 Sa 30.

⁸ When Esau and Jacob were in the womb, struggling, it was revealed to their mother that: "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples, born of you, shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen 25:23) ("וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לָהּ שְׁנֵי גֵזִיִּים [גֵּזִיִּים] בְּבֶטְנָהּ וְשֵׁנִי יִשְׁעֵר וְהַבְּרִיָּא יִשְׂרָאֵל"). Soon after Esau's birth "his brother came forth, and his hand had taken hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob" (Gen 25:26) ("וַאֲחֵרֵיכֵן יָצָא אָחִיו וִידּוֹ אָחֻזָּה"). After tricking Esau and gaining his birthright, Jacob and Esau parted ways for many years, and after met only once, so as to reconcile themselves. Following this, Jacob fought the angel of God and prevailed, earning the name "Israel." His sons later formed the twelve tribes that would become the Israelites. The judgment of God concerning Esau is as follows: "I have loved Jacob but I have hated Esau; I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert" (Mal 1:2–3) (Quoted in Rom 9:13; "וְיָהוָה וְאִמְרָתָם: בְּמֶה אֶהְבֵּתִי הָלוֹא אֶח עִשָׂו לִיעֲקֹב נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה וְאֶהֱבֵה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב: וְאֶת־עִשָׂו שְׂנֵאתִי: וְאֲשִׁים אֶת־הָרִי וְאֶת־נַחֲלָתוֹ לְתַנּוּת מִדְּבָר:"). God hated Esau and his descendants, among which are the Amalekites.

⁹ "זָכוֹר אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה לְךָ עַמְּלֵק בְּיָדְךָ בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם: אֲשֶׁר קָרָךְ בְּיָדְךָ: "וַיִּזְנוּב בְּךָ כָּל־הַנְּחָשִׁלִּים אַחֲרֶיךָ וְאַתָּה עָנָף וַיִּגַּע וְלֹא יָרָא אֱלֹהִים: (Deu 25:17–18).

¹⁰ Descendants of Jacob and Esau probably met during their reconciliation, but at that time Jacob had yet to become Israel.

book will thus serve as a warning for future generations, so that they would not have mercy on the descendants of Esau, something that would ultimately cause King Saul to be rejected by God.¹¹ Therefore, writing first becomes a tool for the remembrance of history: not one made to help them glorify the past, otherwise, the first book could have been dedicated to God's wondrous signs in Egypt, but rather one made to help them prepare the future. History as a *teaching*, history as a *law*, two English words that would be united in Hebrew: the *Torah* (תּוֹרָה).

On the third month of the Exodus, the Israelites then arrive at Mount Sinai. Moses alone is allowed to speak to God on the mountain, and after an elaborate ritual, the members of his people are then ready to receive the revelation of the Law, directly from the divine voice. After hearing the Ten Commandments, the people is unable to stand the powerful presence of God. Its members thus ask Moses to act as a mediator, as he alone seems able to endure the divine presence: "you speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die." (Exo 20:19¹²). The people then stands afar off, and Moses alone receives the new set of laws. He receives the laws orally, and orally also does he first transmit them to the people, who acknowledges their authority: "all the words which the LORD has spoken we will do." (Exo 24:3¹³). Immediately after this, Moses writes all these laws into a book that is usually called by scholars the "covenant code." The Torah then begins to take form. Commenting on this passage, S^t Augustine makes a comparison with the Pentecost,¹⁴ as in both cases, God comes with fire. The two events nevertheless show a significant difference. In the first, the people is afraid and it refuses the proximity of the divine, whereas in the second, the Apostles welcome the tongues of fire.¹⁵

Following this, God commands Moses: "Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tables of

¹¹ 1 Sa 15:7–11.

¹² "וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר־אַתָּה עִמָּנוּ וְנִשְׁמָעָה וְאַל־יְדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים פֶּן־נָמוּת:" (Exo 20:19).

¹³ "כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה נַעֲשֶׂה:" (Exo 24:3).

¹⁴ Lienhard, Joseph T. *ACCS: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. InterVarsity Press, 2014: 109. Print.

¹⁵ Acts 2:3. Furthermore, in the second case, the writing is not done on tablets of stone, but rather in the heart of men.

stone, with the Law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.” (Exo 24:12¹⁶). Once on the mountain, Moses first orally receives detailed instructions for the building of the tabernacle and the laws establishing the Levitical priesthood. Moses stays forty days on Mount Sinai, at the end of which he receives the tablets. Information is scarce concerning their appearance, or the way they are carved and received. The book of Exodus only mentions “the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God” (Exo 31:18¹⁷). The book of Deuteronomy nonetheless gives us more information:

And the LORD gave me the two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them were all the words which the LORD had spoken with you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly. And at the end of forty days and forty nights the LORD gave me the two tables of stone, the tables of the covenant. (Deu 9:10–11¹⁸)

From this, it is thus known that the tablets were written by the “finger of God,” an anthropomorphic metaphor which the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explicitly interprets as designating the Holy Spirit.¹⁹

The narrative also gives us an indication concerning the text that was carved on the tablets: it is the Ten Commandments that were given orally to the people down of Mount Sinai. Two more pieces of information are also given: the material out of which the tablets were made, and their name: the “tables of the covenant.” The material and the name are both powerful signs showing that this alliance was made to be stronger than the covenant established with Noah, which was made orally, with a fleeting rainbow as its sign. The sons of Noah indeed quickly disregarded this covenant,

¹⁶ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה עֲלֵה אֵלַי הָהָרָה וְהִנֵּחַ־שָׁם וְאֶת־לַחַת הָאֲבֹן “ (Exo 24:12).

¹⁷ “שְׁנֵי לַחַת הָעֵדֻת לַחַת אֶבֶן כְּתֻבִּים בְּאֶצְבַּע אֱלֹהִים:” (Exo 31:18).

¹⁸ וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֵלַי אֶת־שְׁנֵי לַחַת הָאֲבָנִים כְּתֻבִּים בְּאֶצְבַּע אֱלֹהִים וְעַל־יָהֵם כָּכָל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם בְּהָר מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ בְּיוֹם הַקָּהָל: וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ “אֲרֻבָּעִים יוֹם וָאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה נָתַן יְהוָה אֵלַי אֶת־שְׁנֵי לַחַת הָאֲבָנִים לַחַת הַבְּרִית:” (Deu 9:10 11).

¹⁹ Bordwell, David. *Catechism of the Catholic Church Revised PB*. London: A&C Black, 2002: 162. Print. (§ 700).

building the tower of Babel and denying God. Therefore, this time, the covenant is sealed with a stone, made to last forever, and the terms of this alliance are written down so that they would neither be changed nor be forgotten.

The pious descendants of an impious generation would therefore still be able to find back the Law, contrary to the case of the previous covenant. Previously, indeed, if only one generation failed to transmit the Law, later generations would then be unable to recover it. Unfortunately, while God and Moses were establishing this covenant in stone, sealed by a physical object, the Israelites were rejecting their creator, who transcends the material universe, to favor a physical idol, made of gold by the hands of men. Unable to see the one who transcends the physical world, they settled for what was easy to grasp, with both their mind and their hands. Down from the mountain, Moses thus arrives in sight of the Israelites' camp, and their infamous golden calf:

And Moses turned, and went down from the mountain with the two tables of the testimony in his hands, tables that were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "There is a noise of war in the camp." But he said, "It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear." And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tables out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. (Exo 32:15–19²⁰)

We are here given a last information concerning the tablets: they are carved on both sides (**מִשְׁנֵי עֲבֵרֵיהֶם**). Most commentators do

וַיִּפֶן וַיֵּרֶד מֹשֶׁה מִן־הָהָר וַיֹּשִׁיב לַחַת הָעֵדֻת בְּיָדוֹ לַחַת כְּתָבִים מִשְׁנֵי עֲבָרֵיהֶם”²⁰
מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה הֵם כְּתָבִים: וְהַלַּחַת מַעֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים הָמָּה וְהַמִּכְתָּב מִכְתָּב אֱלֹהִים הוּא
חֲרוּת עַל־הַלַּחַת: וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־קוֹל הָעָם בְּרַעַה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־מֹשֶׁה קוֹל מַלְחָמָה
בַּמַּחֲנֶה: וַיֹּאמֶר אִין קוֹל עֲנוּת גְּבוּרָה וְאִין קוֹל עֲנוּת חַלּוּשָׁה קוֹל עֲנוּת אֲנָכִי שָׁמַע:
וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר קָרַב אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הָעָנָל וּמַחֲלַת נִיחָר־אָפ מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁלַךְ [מִיָּדוֹ]
(Exo 32:15–20). ”(מִיָּדָיו) אֶת־הַלַּחַת וַיִּשְׁבֵּר אֹתָם תַּחַת הָהָר:

not seem to have paid attention to this, but the fact that such a detail is also mentioned concerning the scrolls appearing in the visions of both Ezekiel²¹ and S^t John²² should convince us that it has a particular significance. Commenting on Ezekiel, S^t Gregory the Great sees the two-sided nature of the scroll as a symbol for the interpretation process:

It is also said, concerning the scroll: it was written on the inside and the outside. The sacred scroll has been written on the inside by allegory, on the outside by history. On the inside, by the spiritual intelligence; on the outside, by the simple meaning of the letter, fitting for the weak in spirit. On the inside, because it gives a promise of the invisible; on the outside, because it establishes the order of the visible by the rectitude of its precepts. On the inside, because it offers a guarantee concerning the celestial; on the outside, because it teaches how to make use of the terrestrial things, worthy of contempt, or how to escape from the desire they induce.²³

Gregory's interpretation has deep implications, but the opisthograph has also been seen as a symbol of the fullness of the message given.²⁴ Following both of these tracks, it can be argued that the nature of the tablets may perhaps also be a sign that the Law cannot be grasped in its fullness, and that its understanding is tied to a process. The text would never be visible in its entirety, and one would have to rotate the tablets while remembering the

²¹ Eze 2:9.

²² Rev 5:1.

²³ TBA. (The following French translation was consulted for reference: Pope Gregory I, and Charles Morel. *Homélie sur Ezéchiel*. Editions du Cerf, 1986: 371. Print.) Original Latin: "De quo adhuc libro subditur: Qui erat scriptus intus et foris. Liber enim sacri eloquii intus scriptus est per allegoriam, foris per historiam. Intus per spiritalem intellectum, foris autem per sensum litterae simplicem, adhuc infirmantibus congruentem. Intus, quia invisibilia promittit; foris, quia visibilia praeceptorum suorum rectitudine disponit. Intus, quia coelestia pollicetur, foris autem quia terrena contemptibilia qualiter sint, vel in usu habenda, vel ex desiderio fugienda, praecipit." From: Gregory (The Great). *Sancti Gregorii Pp. I magni romani pontificis homiliarum in Ezechielem prophetam libri duo — liber primus*. n.p., n.d. N. pag. PDF. (§ 9.30).

²⁴ Keil, Carl Friedrich. *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968: 51. Print.

other side to fully know the commandments. This reliance on the fallible human memory would nonetheless make this grasp always fleeting and imperfect. It would also show that the understanding of the Law is set in time and space, and perhaps also show that a community of interpreters is needed: two different persons can each see a side of the tablets, so they could, in theory, understand the whole law if there were no impediment in their communication, and if their horizons were perfectly fused. This hypothesis will be further examined in the meta-narrative, and it will thus be left aside in order to return to the narrative itself.

By the sound of his voice, God made his commandments known, and by their voice also did the Israelites make their transgression known to Joshua and Moses: “It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear.”²⁵ It is not the strong shout of a people eager to receive the Law, nor the cry of a humble people afraid of its burden, but rather the singing of a foolish and impatient people. They were already bound by the orally ratified commandments, but before receiving the physical symbol of this alliance they already rejected it, prompting Moses to shatter the seal of this broken covenant. For S^t Augustine, the golden calf shows that “the Law, when grace gives no aid, makes transgressors and exists only in the letter.”²⁶ Contrary to the people, however, God is patient:

So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Alas, this people have sinned a great sin; they have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.” But the LORD said

²⁵ The verse contains a wordplay that is not perceivable in translation, and which may have a particular significance. According to the Septuagint, Joshua does not hear the sound of singing, but rather the “sound of the beginning of [a banquet of] wine” (φωνὴν ἐξαρχόντων οἴνου). In the Hebrew text, the same root word is used for “shouting,” “the cry” and “singing” (עָנָה), a word which can also mean “to answer,” or designate a choral response. Some, as Aloysius Lippomanus, have read this passage following this alternative meaning (Aloysius Lippomanus. *Catena in exodum ex auctoribus ecclesiasticis plus minus sexaginta, usque partim Graecis, partim Latinis, connexa*. Paris, 1550. Print. Original Latin: “vox eorum qui respondeat fortiter”).

²⁶ Lienhard, Joseph T. *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. InterVarsity Press, 2014: 142. Print.

to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. (Exo 32:31–33²⁷)

Moses’ intercession is reminiscent of Abraham’s, when he interceded for Sodom.²⁸ God’s answer is the same in both cases: he will destroy the wicked and spare the innocent. It is remarkable that here again writing is at the center of Moses’ plea. The book would seem to refer to the “book of life,” which is mentioned in the Psalms and the Apocalypse.²⁹ An old Latin version of this passage, quoted by St Clement,³⁰ also supports this interpretation by explicitly referring to the book. What is this book of life? St Augustine mentions the idea that it could be a record of the lives of all human beings. For him, it represents “a certain divine power, by which it shall be brought about that everyone shall recall to memory all his own works, whether good or evil”³¹ In the same book, the bishop of Hippo also tells us that “it symbolizes His predestination of those to whom eternal life shall be given,” but he also defines it as the “infallible prescience”³² of God. St Thomas Aquinas, on the other hand, sees the book as a metaphor,³³ nonetheless describing a theological reality: “the inscription of those ordained to eternal life.”³⁴ St Augustine’s idea of prescience or foreknowledge is certainly appealing, but hard to apply to the exegesis of Moses’ intercession. St Thomas’ hypothesis, on the contrary, would seem far more in adequacy with the passage: the blotting out from the book meaning that one would not be welcomed in eternal life. Such a simple explanation would nevertheless not clarify the need to use such an obscure metaphor.

²⁷ וַיִּשָּׁב מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אָנָּה חָטָא הָעָם הַזֶּה חֲטָאָה גְדֹלָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לִי חָם וַיִּלְחָדוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִזְבֵּחַ אֱמִתָּשָׁא חֲטָאָתָם וְאִם־אֵין מַחְנִי נָא מִסְפָּרָךְ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי יִזְבֵּחַ: וַעֲתָה אֱמִתָּשָׁא חֲטָאָתָם וְאִם־אֵין מַחְנִי נָא מִסְפָּרָךְ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי יִזְבֵּחַ: וַעֲתָה אֱמִתָּשָׁא חֲטָאָתָם וְאִם־אֵין מַחְנִי נָא מִסְפָּרָךְ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ: (Exo 32:31–34).

²⁸ Gen 18:22–33.

²⁹ Notably: Rev 3:5; Rev 13:8; Psa 69:28.

³⁰ Menzies, Allan. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume IX — Recently Discovered Additions to Early Christian Literature*. New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007: 245. Print. (ch. 53).

³¹ Schaff, Philip. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series, Volume II*. St. Augustine: *City of God, Christian Doctrine*. New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007: 434. Print.

³² *Ibid.*: 435.

³³ Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica, Part I (Prima Pars)*. Indore: Kartindio.com: 465. Print. (24.1).

³⁴ *Ibid.*: 471 (24.3).

The book of life may therefore not only be a metaphor or a symbol. It may not merely refer to the divine foreknowledge, as argued S^t Augustine, but, in the words of S^t Thomas, rather refer to the “knowledge of God,”³⁵ that is, the sum of all knowledge of creation. In this case, the blotting out would not only mean that one would not inherit eternal life but also that one would be erased from *being* as a whole, in the past, present and future. This hypothesis would raise a perplexing question: can God completely erase things from the book, that is, can God deliberately forget?

The dialogue between God and Moses keeps some of its mystery. It is nonetheless clear that God here gives the Israelites another chance to be redeemed. Two new tablets are to be made on his command:

The LORD said to Moses, “Cut two tables of stone like the first; and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables, which you broke. . . . So Moses cut two tables of stone like the first; and he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand two tables of stone. . . . And the LORD said to Moses, “Write these words; in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. (Exo 34:1–28³⁶)

New tablets are made, but these are not identical to the previous ones. They are both made of stone, but the first tablets were hewed and carved by God himself, probably from a rock on the top of Mount Sinai, whereas Moses crafted the second ones himself, taking the material from outside the sanctified ground of the

³⁵ Ibid.: 465 (24.1).

³⁶ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פָּסֹל־לָךְ שְׁנֵי־לַחַת אֲבָנִים כְּרֹאשֵׁימֵי וְכַתְּבֵתִי עַל־הֵלָחַת אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ עַל־הֵלָחַת הַרְּאשִׁימֵי אֲשֶׁר שִׁבַּרְתָּ: . . . וַיִּפְסֹל שְׁנֵי־לַחַת אֲבָנִים כְּרֹאשֵׁימֵי וַיִּשָּׁבֶם מֹשֶׁה בַּבֶּקֶר וַיַּעַל אֶל־הָר סִינַי כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ שְׁנֵי לַחַת אֲבָנִים: . . . וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כְּתֹב־לָךְ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כִּי עַל־פִּי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כָּרַתִּי אֶתְךָ וְאֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיְהִי־שָׁם עִם־יְהוָה אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה לֶחֶם לֹא אָכַל וּמַיִם לֹא שָׁתָה וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל־הֵלָחַת אֶת דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית: עֲשֶׂתָה הַדְּבָרִים: (Exo 34:1–28).

mountain. This marks a distancing of God from the Israelites: Moses interceded for them, and therefore his responsibility toward them is increased. He is more than ever the mediator between God and his people, as God refuses direct contact with this spiritually adulterous generation, even in writing. Only the words of the Law remain as a thread linking creature and creator, but this link comes with two levels of intermediation: Moses, and writing. The nature of this intermediation will be further analyzed later, in our examination of the meta-narrative.

Following the carving of the second tablets, the Israelites are then finally given the seal of their renewed alliance. The tablets are to be placed in the Ark of the Covenant as a testimony for all generations. The rest of the Law, giving the details of all the commandments, laws and statutes of YHWH, are progressively written down by Moses. The different texts that were mentioned in Exodus and Deuteronomy were all written down by the hand of Moses, with the exception of the first tablets, which were written by God himself. This collection of texts would then be edited and organized to form what is now known as the Torah, the Pentateuch. According to tradition, and references in other parts of the narrative,³⁷ this work was done entirely by Moses, with the exception of the writing of the last verses of Deuteronomy describing his death, which are said to have been authored by Joshua.

This survey of the appearance of writing shows that this new medium immediately acquired a central place in the biblical narrative. It was introduced and used by divine command, showing that the written word has a special role in God's plan for his people. Writing did not start with Moses, but it waited for him to take its full place in the narrative, and it is through the events described in the previous pages that the meta-narrative of the emergence of literacy can be uncovered.

³⁷ The verses supporting a Mosaic authorship of the Torah are numerous: 2 Kin 21:8, 1 Chr 15:15, 1 Chr 22:13, 2 Chr 24:6, 2 Chr 33:8, 2 Chr 34:14, Neh 1:8, Neh 8:14, Neh 10:29, Mal 4:4, Mat 8:4, Mat 19:8, Mat 22:14, Mar 1:44, Mar 7:10, Mar 10:4, Luk 5:14, Luk 20:37, Luk 24:27, Joh 1:45, Joh 5:46, Joh 7:19, Joh 7:22, Joh 8:5, Act 3:22, Act 15:21, Act 26:22, Rom 10:5, Rom 10:19, 2 Cor 3:15, Heb 9:19.

4.2 The meta-narrative of language in the Sinai episode

The exodus from the land of Egypt is one of the most well-known episodes of the Old Testament. At this point, the narrative has chosen a narrower focus than the one of the book of Genesis, setting aside the global (hi)story of mankind to give us a more detailed account of the life of one of the 72 peoples created during the event of Babel: the Hebrews. In the meta-narrative, this group will be seen as the direct descendant of the “custodians” mentioned in the last chapter, that is, the people that kept custody of the Adamic language, which has now evolved to become what is known as the Hebrew language, the language used to write the major part of the Old Testament narrative itself.

With the confusion of tongues, the unique language of humanity was split into 72 languages, with each one representing an isolated set of signs, cut off from the others. The Adamic house that sheltered all mankind was thereby replaced by a multitude of dwellings, populated by a fraction of the descendants of Adam. Language, then, had no unity. It formed a series of insular subsets, each representing an independent tongue, with a peculiar, embedded tradition. When the Hebrews leave their life of servitude behind in Egypt, however, the linguistic situation is certainly not as clear and simple: many years have passed, and the people has experienced migrations and contacts with other groups, the Egyptians in particular, who already formed a powerful nation that seemed to be master over a large region of Earth. Other peoples had similar experiences: the other houses were built further, and formed new structures, whereas some of their other parts collapsed and fell into oblivion, as they lacked the constant support that they needed in order to remain, standing.

The narrative is silent concerning the first contacts between languages and traditions, something that could interpreted as an isolation of the various houses of being of the meta-narrative during this period. The Hebrews, and Moses in particular, probably mastered the Egyptian language, and he perhaps even knew it better than the language of Adam. The wisdom of the narrative, which keeps this question concealed for now, will nonetheless be followed, and the houses will be considered as isolated from one

another at this point. The question of their interaction will only be examined in the next chapter, when these linguistic contacts are first explicitly described by the narrative. For now, our attention will be focused on the most prominent transformation of language contained in the Sinai narrative: the emergence of the written word, which marks the transition from an exclusively oral language to one that includes both orality and literacy, a transition that will deeply affect the village of being of the meta-narrative. First, in order to uncover the meta-narrative of the emergence of literacy, the nature and peculiarities of an exclusively oral language will nonetheless be characterized, as it constitutes the environment prevailing before the emergence. Several aspects of the appearance of writing will then be examined: its effects, purpose, and impact on the life of the Hebrews, and on mankind as a whole.

4.2.1 Language and orality

*Bet, pas krosnį atsisėdęs,
Senas bočius su vaikais
Atsiminęs pasakoją,
Kad anais laikais
Savo ausimis girdėjęs
Nuo senų, rimtų žmonių*

But they sat down by the
hearth, old folks with the
children, remembering
tales that in another time
they heard with their own
ears from old, grave
people

— Maironis ³⁸

In order to perceive the significance of the emergence of literacy, one must have a clear vision of what it complements: orality. Even though every one of us has an instinctive and cultural knowledge concerning the nature of orality in our earthly lives, its nature in the meta-narrative is far less obvious, and this is why it will be examined here, before exploring the meta-narrative of the advent of literacy itself. One must first clearly perceive the nature of the oral word itself, and the nature of its relation to language in general. Then only may the peculiarities of the village during the era when orality held sway over it be perceived, in the meta-narrative.

³⁸ TBA. Maironis. “Pavasario balsai.” *Lietuvių klasikinės literatūros antologija*. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.

Finally, once the oral nature of the village of being has been adequately perceived, the impact of the emergence of literacy can then be unveiled.

The Ancient World has, it would seem, always closely associated language with the mouth, as reflected by the names designating this concept: **פֶּה** [šāpāh], the lips in Biblical Hebrew,³⁹ or **γλῶσσα** [glōssa], the tongue in Koine Greek. The Chinese ideograms associated to language, both in classical and modern Chinese, unsurprisingly also follow this line of thought: the modern word for “language” (語言 [yǔ yán]), for example, contains three instances of the character for “mouth” (口 [kǒu]). The house of being of the oral era seems to be considered the “original” form of language, in the narrative as well as in our world(s). It could seem very natural for men to equal language with the fruit of the mouth, as it is *in* oral speech that man first tastes the joy of language, long before he learns its other forms. It can nonetheless be noticed that the mouth is not the only element necessary for man to communicate orally: the ear is as indispensable as the mouth, but it is hardly to be found in the etymological roots of the concept of language across the world, perhaps revealing that the production of speech is more valued than its reception.⁴⁰ Saussure, like many of his contemporaries, considered that speech represents the “true” form of language, as opposed to writing, in particular.⁴¹ The emergence of writing, as seen in the narrative, will give us an occasion to ponder the relationship between oral and written language, and the validity of the claim of the superiority of the oral over the written, as it is reflected in the meta-narrative. In order to do so, and in order to see how writing transforms the

³⁹ Gen 11:9: the “confusion of tongues” literally is the “confusion of the lips.” Modern Hebrew, on the other hand, commonly uses **לשון**: “tongue.”

⁴⁰ The aforementioned words used in the Ancient World nonetheless do not seem to have designated “language” in its modern linguistic sense. It was not a general concept of language as the Saussurian *langage*, but rather language as a set of *langues*, tongues as spoken by different groups rather than an overarching concept uniting all these as *langage*. Linguistics now see *langage* and *langues* in a different way, even though the assimilation of language with oral speech has nonetheless persisted until modern times.

⁴¹ This prejudice in favor of orality over other forms of language, writing in particular, is now known as “phonocentrism,” a neologism coined by Jacques Derrida in a monograph devoted to this question (*Derrida, Jacques. Of Grammatology. JHU Press, 1998. Print.*). This question of phonocentrism nonetheless only emerges when a contrasting element to orality appears.



Fig. 12 *Oral communication.*

language of the men of the narrative and the houses of being of the meta-narrative, one must nonetheless first know what orality is.

In the language of the Τέχνη, orality can be firstly seen as the linguistic use of the mouth, the tongue, and the respiratory system, for the production of speech on the one hand, and the use of the auditory system for its reception on the other. This crude description has thus been represented in Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*:

One element, invisible in Saussure's figure, nonetheless plays a central role in orality, serving as the mediating agent between these two systems. This element is what sets up a ground on which oral language can grow: the air. Physically, speech is a complex sound wave, a phenomenon through which the particles composing the air vibrate, thereby transmitting this vibration in all directions across both space and time. Beyond this technical definition, orality can also be thought of poetically, closer to the earth and experience. The air is not a mere aggregate of particles in gaseous form: as portrayed by Heidegger, inspired by Hölderlin, the air is also the ether, "the free air of the higher heavens, the open realm of the spirit."⁴² The ether is not only the medium of speech, it is also the manifestation of the spirit, as reflected by the dual meaning of the following terms in the three languages of the Scriptures: the Hebrew רוּחַ [rūah], the Aramaic רִיחָא [rūḥā] and the Greek πνεύμα [pneúma] all three designate both "the wind" and "the spirit." This means that the air is not only earthly, that is, physical or material, but that it is also something more: a link between the earth, man,

⁴² TBA. Original German: "Äther bedeutet hier: die freie Luft des hohen Himmels, den offenen Bereich des Geistes." From: GA 16:521.

the heavens, and the Deity. The ether “designates all that is not perceived by the sensory organs, the non-sensuous, the mind and the spirit.”⁴³ Thus, even though speech indeed represents a wave, it is not in a merely technical sense: it rather is to be thought of as the sound produced by the aforementioned lyre of Heraclitus, as both the cause and effect of a tension, which here is a tension between the five elements linked by the air. When man utters a word, his speech is propagated in all directions, resonating in his skull, going into the earth, in the sky, and onto the Deity, all through the mediation of the ether, which brings them together by allowing the possibility of the oral word.

Besides its link with the spirit, the air is also closely tied to life, as illustrated in the narrative by the fact that the Deity breathes into Adam’s nostrils in order to make him a living being.⁴⁴ The breath of life makes man a *living* being, and language is what makes him a *human* being. Breath is as indispensable to language as it is to life: oral speech is in itself always occurring when exhaling, and it is always constrained by the biological necessity of breathing. Speech has to follow the rhythm of man’s breathing, and it is bounded by it. It thus always occurs in a-pnea (ἀ-πνοια [ápnōia]), that is, while not receiving air, not receiving the spirit (πνεῦμα [pneûma]). It is commonly opposed to silence, but the act of speaking may also be opposed to breathing: man could indeed theoretically speak in a continuous flow of words and sentences, without any interruption, but it without a doubt would not be possible for a man to speak for more than a couple of minutes without interrupting his speech in order to allow for his lungs to be replenished with fresh air. This would naturally induce a silence. It shows that the need for air is the strongest constraint on oral speech. It was seen in the first chapter that language opens up a world, built with the earth as its foundation, or, in other words, that the meta-physical world rests upon the physical earth. The relationship between speech and breathing gives us a new illustration of this fact. Breathing is essentially an exchange between man and the earth: he inhales fresh air, the matter that sustains his life and penetrates the center of his chest, and then reaches almost

⁴³ TBA. Original German: “dies Wort steht in Hebels Satz für all das, was nicht die Sinnesorgane wahrnehmen, das Nicht-Sinnliche — der Sinn und der Geist.” From: GA 16:530.

⁴⁴ Gen 2:7.

instantly every part of his body. By exhaling, man gives back to the earth, but doing so, he also through speech has an occasion to exchange with a different, non-physical element.

In contrast with breathing, seen as an exchange with the earth, speech represents an exchange with the world. Through speaking and hearing, both of which are made possible by the earth and the air, man can give to the world, that is, edify it. He may also receive from it, in the form of insights. This secondary form of exchange is nonetheless always dependent on the first: breathing is prior to, and has priority over speech, as it alone is necessary in order for man to remain living. The ether, however, is not only earthly: it is “the free air of the higher heavens,”⁴⁵ implying that by breathing man not only enters in relation with the earth but also with the skies, which give him signs for the days, the months, the seasons, and the years. Breathing is the most easily perceivable sign that a man is alive, a sign marked by discontinuity: it is like a ticking clock that points out the flow of time, as a reminder that man’s days are numbered, and that his breathing will one day come to an end, taking his spirit with his last breath. This link with the skies shows that speech, as an element of language that opens up a world, is not a purely meta-physical *idea*, in the platonic sense, but that it rather is rooted and framed by the earth and the skies, by matter and time.

Speech therefore not only has a chronological precedence over other forms of language: it is also the one that has the closest bond to the elements. It is rooted in the earth, extended in the skies, and it occurs in cooperative harmony with the breath of life. This may explain a propension to phonocentrism, and even justify it to some extent. Phonocentrism may thus not necessarily be the result of a groundless bias. It may even be considered “natural.” This nonetheless does not imply that man should accept it without question. Orality may only form the most fundamental, the most basic form of language, one grounded in the elements, a form that should later be completed by another, thereby pushing the limits of language toward a new territory, inaccessible with speech. Speech may be fundamental, but like every foundation, it is meant to support and be the ground of an upper structure, one that will

⁴⁵ TBA. Original German: “Äther bedeutet hier: die freie Luft des hohen Himmels, den offenen Bereich des Geistes.” From: GA 16:521.

be less in contact with the earth but that will be extended farther in the skies. Speech represents such a foundation of language. Its limitations must be overcome by the emergence of another form of language, and this is what can be seen in the meta-narrative of the Sinai episode.

The description of speech given in the previous pages has nonetheless set aside one of its important aspects: the idea of inner speech. This concept describes our purely cognitive experience of speech, as produced by ourselves when we “talk in our head,” or it describes the remembrance of acts of speech that we have heard in the past. Such speech does not make use of the mouth or the ears. It is not shareable with others, but we nonetheless perceive it as speech, similar to the “outer” speech involving physical sounds. Derrida sees this differentiation between inner and outer speech as a source of our metaphysics:

The system of “hearing(understanding)-oneself-speak” through the phonic substance—which *presents itself* as the nonexterior, nonmundane, therefore nonempirical or noncontingent signifier—has necessarily dominated the history of the world during an entire epoch, and has even produced the idea of the world, the idea of world-origin, that arises from the difference between the worldly and the non-worldly, the outside and the inside, ideality and nonideality, universal and nonuniversal, transcendental and empirical, etc.⁴⁶

This differentiation, and the “privilege of the *phone*,”⁴⁷ qualified as unavoidable by Derrida, are thus “natural.” They correspond to a necessary stage for man, who naturally creates a hierarchy favoring what is perceived as the most personal, the most intimate. In this regard, the inner speech is the higher form, followed by the “outer

⁴⁶ Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. JHU Press, 1998: 7–8. Print. Original French: “Le système du «s’entendre-parler» à travers la substance phonique qui se donne comme signifiant non-extérieur, non-mondain, donc non empirique ou non-contingent — a dû dominer pendant toute une époque l’histoire du monde, a même produit l’idée de monde, l’idée d’origine du monde à partir de la différence entre le mondain et le non-mondain, le dehors et le dedans, l’idéauté et la non-idéauté, l’universel et le non-universel, le transcendantal et l’empirique, etc.,” from: Derrida, Jacques. *De la grammatologie*. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967: 17. Print.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

speech,” which is seen as a decayed form of thought, but one that nonetheless comes from the heart and soul of man, through his breath. Other forms of language are placed at the bottom of this hierarchy, as they are seen as a mere imitation of oral speech, or even as a corrupted form of speech. Orality thus constrains man’s metaphysics. He is nonetheless not a prisoner of this hierarchy: he may overcome this basic structure and build on top of it, reshaping it to make it better reflect the Φύσις. An event will nonetheless be needed in order for this to occur. The foundation has to be shaken first if man is to realize its weaknesses.

4.2.2 Peculiarities of an exclusively oral language

*Išnyksiu kaip dūmas,
neblaškomas vėjo, Ir niekas
manęs neminės! Tiek
tūkstančių amžiais gyveno,
kentėjo, O kas jų bent vardą
atspės?*

I will vanish like smoke,
undisturbed by the wind,
and no one will remember
me! So many thousands lived
through the ages, suffered,
and who can even guess their
name?

— Maironis ⁴⁸

The world of a people that experiences language only in its oral/phonic dimension will present certain particularities and differences as compared to another, one built by men who experience language in different forms, such as a combination of oral and written language. Some of these peculiarities will now be briefly examined, so as to gain a clearer view of the change operated by the paradigm shift initiated by the emergence of writing, both in the narrative and the meta-narrative.

As a language which is, at this point in the narrative, exclusively oral, the Hebrew tongue represents the only repository of information of its speakers. The oral tradition forms the world of the Hebrews, a tradition that is immaterial, distributed in parts in every member of this people, who are all scattered within their

⁴⁸ TBA. Maironis. “Pavasario balsai.” *Lietuvių klasikinės literatūros antologija*. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.

house of being. This tradition emerges as the concatenation of the worldviews of every individual, worldviews that are constructed and shared *in* oral language, with each person acting as a node in an incredibly complex network uniting the dwellers. This oral network gives them a shared world, a world that is completely internalized: no part of it exists outside of what is memorized by the living. There is no reserve, no *Bestand*, as Heidegger would say, in which a part of the world may be stored or preserved, outside the human mind. The language pool is entirely “live”: either presently visible or inexistent.

Men thus are the pillars of the house of being, and each one of the blocks composing it must be supported at all times, otherwise they collapse and disappear without leaving any trace of their past existence. The tradition, what remains of the world of the men who lived and are now gone, is either present, alive in the mind of living speakers, or it has disappeared and is lost forever to mankind. In an oral society, there is no middle ground between these two extremes. The tradition is ruled by a principle of continuity: if the transmission of something is interrupted, absent from the world for just an instant, it is completely lost, because the world rests entirely on the shoulders of the living men. If something is forgotten at one point in time, future generations will have no means to recover it: the future tradition is completely dependent on the present. No direct connection with the past is possible, yet, and only an uninterrupted transmission (an *Überlieferung*, tradition as “handing over”) can guarantee the preservation of a piece of the world. This means that in order for a world opened up by an oral language to exist, men must sustain it at all times, as the pillars of the house of being. Man needs the house in order to be an “ontological being,” a creature concerned with the question of its being and destiny. The house would nonetheless not exist, even for an instant, without the continuous agency of the men who dwell in it.

The need for a continuity of the oral tradition thus shows the fleeting nature of an exclusively oral language. Even disregarding the question of the tradition, oral speech remains marked by a transience inherent to its nature. It requires a temporal proximity in order for it to be heard: the sound waves emitted by the mouth indeed travel at great speed, passing through man in the blink of an eye and fading away almost instantly, leaving no pos-

sibility of a delayed hearing. A man thus has to be present at the moment of the utterance in order to hear it. It also requires a physical proximity, as the limited loudness of the voice gives oral speech a very limited physical range: men need to be close to the speaker if they want to hear him. These two requirements, physical and temporal proximity, imply that a secondary transmission is necessary in order for speech to be propagated across a large number of people. Without any means of telecommunication, this secondary transmission is mainly word-to-mouth, through which men attempt to preserve speech, delivering it to other people after some time, or in other places. It allows speech to be handed over across time, from generation to generation, like the Indian *Vedas* or the Icelandic *sagas*, but also across space, uniting scattered peoples through a common world. In the meta-narrative, this implies that the dwellers of a house of being cannot easily move and access every part of the house. Man needs the helping hands of his immediate neighbors, the dwellers who are physically and temporally close to him, acting like a relay and allowing man to pull himself to other parts of his dwelling. His movements and his discovery of new parts of the house of being therefore entirely depend on the good will of the other dwellers, who are supporting these new parts, acting as the pillars that prevent their collapse.

Speech thus gathers the heavens into man's world. It contracts time and space, shortens temporal and physical distances, and brings the speakers of a common tongue together. Word-to-mouth, however, is far different from direct speech: what is spoken is internalized by each man in the transmission chain, and then brought to speech again, leaving each link of the chain entirely in control of what is passed on. At each stage of a word-to-mouth transmission, the hearer may be mistaken about what has been said. He may also involuntarily distort the message, because of the weakness of his memory, for example. This implies that at each stage, the original speech is at risk of being further and further altered, possibly even becoming completely unrecognizable if it were to come back to the ears of the first speaker. Without being able to speak to him directly, the men who hear the speech through word-to-mouth would have no way to identify a corrupted message: the speech is completely dependent on each man in the chain. An oral tradition is thus closely linked with the individual point of view of its custodians. Men can easily adapt this tradi-

tion and make it evolve with the time and space in which they are located, but it also makes a direct and reliable transmission over long periods of time or great distances virtually impossible. In the meta-narrative, this means that the will-power of the dweller, who wants to preserve and pass on his heritage, will sooner or later be overcome by the work of time, by the skies and the ether, which will relentlessly blow on the house, eroding its blocks until they are no longer recognized by other dwellers, and are then discarded as obsolete, meaningless relics of a distant time.

Another factor at play here is the fact that besides the alteration of the content of a speech inherent to a word-to-mouth transmission, the language of this speech may also be the subject of profound changes. Over generations, languages indeed all evolve: some words are forgotten, while others are created or transformed, in a slow process hardly noticeable for the members of an oral society. Speech handed over across centuries would almost inevitably be affected by this process: the tradition will be progressively adapted to the current language. In many cases, the intention at the source of the original speech will be sufficiently preserved in order to be understood by future generations. However, because signifiers may also be the signifieds of other signifiers, the evolution of language may thus destroy parts of a speech in which the wording is itself significant, such as play-of-words, for example. Because of this, even with a perfect word-to-mouth transmission, the speech will find itself decayed by the work of time: either future generations will not be able to perceive its meaning because of an archaic phrasing if the message is transmitted "as is," or the parts in which the wording is important will be lost if the content of the speech is adapted to the changing tongue. In both cases, the great flexibility of oral languages can be seen, but this flexibility comes with a price: an oral tradition has a very limited lifespan. It decays quickly, and gives place to a new tradition. In the meta-narrative, this implies that the houses of being are subjected to both a natural evolution and a natural decay. Their sign-blocks are worn out by their continuous use, by the work of man's hands, which reshapes them, and by the erosion caused by the work of time. It is also important to note that the changes themselves quickly disappear from the world. Few will even notice the natural changes, which are not the product of man's will, of the Τέχνη, but rather the effect of the Φύσις. The nature and

existence of these changes will fall into oblivion, and man will lose contact with the past of his world, that is, with the world of his forefathers.

In order to properly see the nature of the transformation operated by the emergence of literacy, one must realize that the nature of orality is deeply linked with the temporal dimension. Indeed, the peculiarities of orality all seem to be in some way related to time, one of the dimensions through which all humans live their lives, along with the three spatial dimensions. Speech shares with time one of its most prominent characteristics: its linearity. In the language of the Τέχνη, both are one-dimensional, like a number line used in mathematics.

Contrary to the number line, however, time is a permanent flux: man experiences it only as a moving point, never directly as a timeline. Cardinal Marty wrote that “the linearity of speech, which only progresses, going forward, really is the most vivifying human experience of time.”⁴⁹ As man only experiences the moving forward of time, he does not have a complete experience of it. It is “vivifying” indeed, meaning that this experience is mostly confined to a readiness-to-hand: man lives through time, but he cannot observe it in its presence-at-hand, as he is unable to stop its flow even for an instant, and he is unable to go back in time to scrutinize the past. Time appears as a flux to man, an ever-moving current that engulfs him, leaving him with only a very narrow view of its fullness, as he cannot escape the current and take distance from it. Speech is rooted in time, and it shares its apparent nature as flux: it only goes forward, and nothing that has been spoken can thus be un-spoken or un-heard.

The opposite is nonetheless also true: what has been said, can never be re-said or re-heard, in a Heraclitean sense. The 41st fragment of the Ephesian philosopher, perhaps his most famous, indeed states that one cannot step into the same river twice,⁵⁰ which in the case of speech would seem to mean that one can at-

⁴⁹ TBA. Original French: “la linéarité de la parole, qui ne tient que de progresser, d’aller de l’avant, est bien l’expérience humaine la plus vivifiante du temps.” From: Marty, François. *La bénédiction de Babel: vérité et communication*. Paris: Cerf, 1990: 75. Print.

⁵⁰ “Ποταμοῖσι δις τοῖσι αὐτοῖσι οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης· ἕτερα γὰρ <καὶ ἕτερα> ἐπιρρέει ὕδατα.” From: Henderson, Jeffrey. “HERACLITUS, On the Universe.” *Loeb Classical Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Dec. 2016.

tempt to repeat and hear again something that was said in the past, but that it would never be the same as the original utterance. It would be a re-production, a re-enactment, but never a re-experiencing of the past. The mere fact of re-enacting the utterance would change its meaning, which is linked to the context of its use. By re-producing it, man would signify something new: that the first utterance was not well understood, for example.

Human speech is thus similar to the human experience of time. It is a one-dimensional flux that only goes forward, and never stops. Speech can be interrupted by silence, but it itself cannot be frozen in time. Sound waves cannot be heard outside of the flow of time that bears them because what is heard is precisely their motion. This implies that man cannot distance himself from speech. He cannot treat it as an object and observe its presence-at-hand, as the continuity of the flow prevents it. The flow of speech, however, like the flow of time, does not let the *trace* it leaves be seen by those caught in its current. Memory can retain fragments of speech, but it comes with great limitations.

The flowing nature of speech imposes restrictions on both thought and expression. Its linearity and impermanence both constrain the level of complexity that the human mind can fathom. For example, it would be almost impossible for oral societies to develop complex abstract systems like symbolic calculus. The fact that oral speech is fleeting implies that in order to think, to reflect on and establish new relations between things, all that is thought must already have been memorized. The limitations of human memory thus considerably narrow the field of what can be thought. Tasks such as the accounting of large groups of people, vast sums of money or objects would be very difficult in an oral society. The linearity of speech also affects the range of what can be thought and said, because its close connection to time is counter-balanced by a very loose relation to space. Oral elements cannot be isolated and organized in time in the way written words can be organized in space. How difficult would it be to solve complex mathematical equations using only oral speech? It may be possible for a few talented individuals to perform such a task, but it would be particularly inefficient: oral speech is not well fitted for this. A multi-dimensional form of language would not only be far more efficient than one-dimensional speech, it would also allow man to reach a level of complexity of thought that would

be unattainable without it, showing that orality indeed induces restrictions on man's capabilities for abstract reasoning.

Most of the aforementioned peculiarities of oral speech could be seen as weaknesses over other forms of language, writing in particular. Plato's *Phaedrus* nonetheless rightly points out the fact that oral speech has the advantage of being "alive": if what is spoken is ambiguous or simply unintelligible, the hearer can in turn speak, and ask for a clarification.⁵¹ The immediacy of speech and the proximity it entails allows man to enter into a dialogue. Oral speech is not a mere exhibition of thought, but rather a forum where speech can be exchanged.

From the days of Adam up until the time of the ascent of Mount Sinai by Moses, the house of being based on oral speech nonetheless was not only a place where the words and traditions of men could be preserved: it was also, and perhaps foremost, the place where the divine law was revealed and safeguarded. This law constitutes a linguistic guide, a path carved in language so as to ensure that man's path toward the manifestation of his essential being continues, indicating the pitfalls that lay on the way. The law is what links man, his being, and his destiny to the Deity, and this link is tightly intertwined with the nature of the house of being that shelters it. The nature of this link should thus be examined, as literacy will profoundly affect the world of the meta-narrative.

4.2.3 Oral language, oral law, and the path of thinking

When readers of the Scriptures think about "the Law," they often associate it with the commandments received by Moses at Sinai, or the five books composing the "Torah." The divine law nonetheless started earlier in the narrative, at the dawn of man in Eden, with the prohibition to eat from the "tree of knowledge of good and evil." Generations later, a set of seven laws was given to Noah by the Deity, as he established a new covenant with mankind. This law, binding for all peoples, was given orally and was sealed by a sign in the sky: a rainbow.⁵² Arriving in Sinai, the Hebrews

⁵¹ Plato. *Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997: 583. Print. (Phaedrus 275e).

⁵² Gen 9.

still share a common oral law with the 71 other peoples created at Babel, a law transmitted orally from generation to generation, and which constitutes the main reference guiding their lives, so that they would not fall back in the sins that led to the confusion of tongues and the scattering of the peoples, and would instead embrace their destiny.

The Law is thus linked with man's effort to clearly see his relationship with the Φύσις into which he is thrown, and the destiny that the Deity has set for him. As a divine gift to man, the Law traces a path for his thinking. It paves the way for a greater consciousness of his facticity and his destiny. This gift comes in the form of language, or more precisely in the form of oral speech. The law, like man's path of thinking in general, is thus deeply correlated with the nature and evolution of language. This relation, however, is one of mutual influence, as even before the giving of the first command, it was seen in the second chapter that language itself could be seen as a form of law.

The onomastic covenant established between Adam and the Deity traced a line defining elements of the world, as "things," an agreement fixing the signified domain of a set of signifiers. The *onoma* (ὄνομα) is the first *nomos* (νόμος). The names are the first law, and perhaps the most fundamental of all laws, as reflected by the narrative, in which the building of the house of signs is one of the first things that Adam did on earth. Language is nonetheless not a rigid law: it is continually actualized and transformed by those who dwell in the house of being. Language is law, but it is also a ground for the institution of other, secondary laws. All the laws known to man come in the form of language, meaning that they are all built up upon the most fundamental law: the onomastic covenant. No matter whether they have a divine or human origin, laws are all contained and made possible by a house of being. They are laws within the Law, language within language. Language is a law, but all laws are enclosed within language. This hegemony of language, which is the result of the work of both man and God, has an unsettling consequence: any divine law will be subjected to the most fundamental law of man: his language. The laws of Noah were given to him in his language, which itself was the product of generations of linguistic change, following the metaphysical views of its speakers. Therefore, the laws were made to fit this particular metaphysics. They were worded using names and

concepts forged by man himself, making them closely linked with the language in which they were given.

What is, however, the nature and purpose of the divine laws? We have seen that language quantizes the continuous *Φύσις* into a discontinuous world, which alone is intelligible to man. It delimitates the continuous into “things” that can be thought upon. The essence of the law is somewhat similar: it delimitates the lawful from the unlawful, good from evil. This delimitation is operated on the world, or more precisely on the part of the world that concerns human actions. Indeed, only the product of a free will can be considered either good or evil: objects in themselves, or the actions of animals, cannot be judged according to the Law, because they are not involved in a process of moral decision: only humans, and perhaps some heavenly beings, can make such choices. The Law therefore traces a line between human actions, cleaving them into two groups, one that is deemed good, and the other evil. The Law can therefore be seen as a secondary quantization, one which is completely dependent on the primary one, as all the delimitations traced by the Law must follow the primary delimitation operated by language: the Law is restricted by linguistic boundaries, it cannot separate what is not distinguished by language.

It is as if the divine law, in the meta-narrative, was painting a picture on the walls of the house of being: a two-colored pattern coating the blocks composing the house, which brings a contrast between what is good, in one color, and what is evil in another. The translucent coating affects man’s perception of his world, and due to the signifying nature of the signs forming the house, it therefore also affects his vision of the whole creation. The law is meta-physical in nature, it is worldly,⁵³ but man can nonetheless bring it to the earth and the skies, extending its reach back into the physical and the temporal, through actions. By separating human actions into two different groups, the law thus traces two different paths that are given to man to tread: he can either follow the law,

⁵³ The concept of law necessarily arises from the world. The earth, in itself, does not contain anything inherently good or bad, lawful or unlawful. It does not even contain any “thing,” as “things” are a way the one and continuous *Φύσις* is represented in the world. The lawful and the unlawful can nonetheless be associated with earthly “things,” once the law exists in the world, as the first command given to Adam, delimiting the fruits of the tree of knowledge of good and evil as unlawful for him to consume.

the path of light, or go against it, treading the path of darkness. It constitutes a guide for man's thinking, helping him to better see where he is and where he is meant to go. This law, this picture of good and evil is revealed to man by the Deity. It nonetheless is not a direct, unmediated knowledge imparted to him. The divine law is a representation superimposed on another representation, a picture overlaid on another: language, the house of being. The law is only seen through language, the walls of the house, which provide a canvas for it to be revealed.⁵⁴

The law, as a guide to thinking, is thus dependent on language, just as thinking in general is. The meta-physical architecture of the house of being and the peculiarities of the sign-blocks forming it will therefore directly and profoundly affect the representation of the law and its perception by the man dwelling in the house. The law given by the Deity to Noah and his kinsmen was a verbal picture, a worldly representation created according to the nature of their language, following the forms of the sign-blocks of their house of being. It was a law inserted in a particular context, a tradition, and a meta-physical worldview. Subsequent modifications of the house, which are inevitable because of the aforementioned inherent weakness of oral languages, will thus imply modifications of the Law. When blocks are transformed, reshaped or replaced, the picture of good and evil will ineluctably be affected: the coating will crack and fall, or it will be stretched and distorted. The new picture will progressively lose its resemblance with the original, divinely painted one, replacing the work of the Deity by the work of men. The oral nature of language, at this point in the meta-narrative, implies that men are the pillars making the house stand, in addition to being its builders. What is handed down to future generations is only what they have preserved continuously. This is true concerning language, and also concerning everything built upon language.

The Law therefore cannot be preserved better than the language in which it was revealed, meaning that the Law, or at least its perception by mankind, is to some extent relative to his language, and to man's ability to preserve it. An oral language thus implies that each generation has a great responsibility toward its

⁵⁴ Not language in general, as *langage*, but rather as *langue*, that is, man's particular language(s).

descendants, as the guidance given by the Law will be affected by each generation. This guidance will be inherited by the men of the future, and it could be transformed so much as to invert it, designating good as evil and vice versa.

The Law would therefore appear to be inevitably fleeting, impossible to be grasped by man. This is not only true concerning the Law, but also concerning language as a whole, and the phenomenon itself. The first quantization brought by language gives man a sight of the Φύσις, but like all perception, it is only an indirect im-pression: in the same way that we do not *see* anything in itself, but rather only *perceive* the light reflected by objects, language only gives us an indirect and limited sight of the Φύσις. It is not seen directly, but rather only inferred from our sense-perception and our world. The divine law is similar, in the sense that the vision that it gives us of what is good and evil is conditioned by the language in which it is given.

The very concept of opposition between “good” and “evil” is nonetheless inherently worldly. It is a “thing” which is the product of language, and is unknown to the earth. Man does not *know* anything good or evil in itself, but he rather only *sees* an overlay on his representation of the Φύσις, an overlay on his house of being that separates the two. Both the house and the overlay can be distorted by changes of the world, the canvas of the Law. Does this imply that the descendants of those who have received the Law would be doomed to receive a corrupted version of it? No, as an antidote to the poison of corruption of the Law has been given to man: he can re-flect, think, and interpret, that is, strive to perceive the truthfulness of the Law and to put it in relation with the world as a whole, or, in other words, he can strive to perceive its grounding. If one truly sees the purpose of the law, the law can then be adapted to follow the transformations of language. Such a person would be able to find the ground of the Law, and to reformulate it, transposing the picture to a different house. It would naturally never be an exact re-production of the original, but a relentless re-grounding of the Law may at least prevent an ever-increasing corruption of it.

Thus, even though both language and the Law are fleeting, man nonetheless has the means to hold them together and to pass them on to new generations. Man is, like language and the Law,

caught in the flow of the Φύσις, and he cannot escape it. The law, the *nomos*, has nevertheless regularly been opposed to it, as it is the product of the will, and it is thus associated with the Τέχνη. From the time of Plato, who debated the nature of names as either the product of *nomos* or Φύσις in his *Cratylus*,⁵⁵ up until Derrida, who contrasted the Φύσις with what he called its “others”: the arts, technology, the Law, institutions, society etc.⁵⁶ These “others,” which could be all designated as products of the Τέχνη, indeed present a clear contrast with the Φύσις, even though they are all encompassed by its flow: they are all related to the will. All Τέχνη indeed arises as the product of man’s will. The will is thus the true contrasting element to the Φύσις, and man is the only earthly creature endowed with it, giving him a special status within the creation. Only *he* possesses the power to oppose the natural course of the Φύσις, by his will. Through his world, opened up by language, man can affect the earth according to his wishes: he can build, cultivate, burn or destroy. The Law, on the other hand, presents him the wish of the Deity: what it wants and expects of him, man’s destiny. It sets a path of good and a path of evil in front of him, leaving him free to choose which one he will tread.

The Τέχνη is therefore not only to be thought of as an “opposing force” to the course of the Φύσις, because it would only represent half of its possibilities: the Τέχνη can be used to oppose the Φύσις, indeed, but it also can be used to assist it, to nurture it, and to complement it. This may be one of the main purposes of the Law: to prevent the misuse of the Τέχνη, and to incite man to use it in a benevolent way, so that rather than opposing the Φύσις, man would willingly take his place in it. For him, it would mean to follow the Law in its full sense, that is, the Law not seen as only limited to the avoidance of taboos but also including the accomplishment of virtuous deeds and the appropriation of the Φύσις through the realization that he has an active role to play in it, and that he is a piece of the divine plan. To reject the Law, to oppose the Φύσις, on the other hand, constitutes a misappropriation: it is a refusal to cooperate with the Φύσις, and an attempt to subject

⁵⁵ Plato. *Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997: 101. Print.

⁵⁶ Derrida, Jacques. *De la grammatologie*. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967: 152. Print.

it to man's will, an obviously futile enterprise, but one that will nonetheless lead a great many to perdition in the narrative.

The Law is thus more than an image on the walls of the house of being, separating good actions from evil ones as a moral judgment. It is also, and perhaps foremost, a way for man to find his place in the *Φύσις*. The discovery of this place represents a milestone in man's quest for his destiny, which is related to his salvation. In his 57th fragment, Heraclitus declared that *Ἀγαθὸν καὶ κακὸν ταῦτόν*:⁵⁷ "good and evil are the same." Before the advent of the Law, it is indeed the case, as the Law is what separates the two. Without a divine law, good and evil would be in the eye of the beholder, relative to each individual, and each would do according to his own will. The Law gives a focus to mankind, a common path, and a common place within the order of the *Φύσις*, but it entirely rests on mankind's capacity to preserve and transmit it, from mouth to mouth, from generation to generation. This reliance on mankind may also be part of the *Φύσις*: the Law lives like a flower, which strives to reproduce itself and to prolong its own life, but can nonetheless wither away if it is not guarded from harm. This fleeting nature of the Law, as a path of thinking, is inherited from the properties of its medium, oral speech. Languages nonetheless also change, under the impulse of both man and the Deity, but a protection will soon come in the form of a new medium for both the Law and thinking itself, one coming at the appointed time, allowing both to better resist the work of time. Orality, however, is also the source of a *lethe*, the effect of which will be counter-acted by literacy.

4.2.4 Orality and *lethe*

Living within the boundaries of an exclusively oral language, the men of the period preceding the ascent of Mount Sinai by Moses have a peculiar experience of time. As stated earlier, oral speech requires that men be physically and temporally close, meaning that their language is extremely focused: communication is punctual, centered on a particular point in time and space. Everything

⁵⁷ TBA. Hippocrates, and Heraclitus. *Hippocrates, Volume IV: Nature of Man*. Trans. W. H. S. Jones. London; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931: 470. Print.

that man has ever heard was spoken by people with whom he was acquainted, and who were at some point close to him, on earth. Man's field of vision within the house of being is thus very narrow, leaving a large part of his dwelling out of his view. All the things he heard about, tales of yore, or stories of remote lands, were given to him through speech by living persons, present right in front of him. In order for him to see new parts of the house of being, man therefore also needs the help of the persons physically and temporally close to him. The continuity of the tradition allows him to receive accounts of events of which all the direct witnesses are long gone, but their veracity can only be trusted when each link of the chain of tradition is itself considered trustworthy. He will only hear the last link, a living being right in front of him, telling him the story, but he will never be quite sure of its truthfulness.

The vision that man has of the house of being thus also depends on the vision of the men who help him discover his dwelling. Thus orally transmitted, the newly discovered parts of the house will be different from the source from whence they came, as they will be reshaped by each one of the men who supported and transmitted them. This shows that orality necessarily leaves a prominent place to the *mythos*, the story, which then occupies the place of what is called history. Anything that has not been personally experienced by man thus comes from the *mythos*, from a narrative based on "hear-say," which is thus without a doubt influenced by the imagination and opinions of numerous links of the chain. Because of this situation, man's relation to time may naturally be enesto-centric,⁵⁸ that is, centered on the *present*, both spatially and temporally; centered on where man think he is located, where he stands.

Man therefore has no consciousness nor vision of the temporality of his house of being. Such enesto-centrism may be partly attributed to orality. It shapes man's relation to time and space, which then becomes a mere succession of experiences, of transient present moments that fade away in the past to make place for the future. This enesto-centrism affects man both in the narrative and the meta-narrative. It affects both his life on earth and his world. Man's world is thus mostly limited to the things that are present:

⁵⁸ From the Greek ἐνεστώς [*enestós*], meaning "standing within." To be contrasted with *ek-stasis*.

the past is soon forgotten, and the future unforeseeable.

Oral speech, however, is perhaps more than any other forms of language in need of time to exist: on an earthly level, the waves forming it cannot be propagated without its continuous flow, but paradoxically, when man speaks, he can hear himself speaking without delay, without any distance with his speech. Oral speech needs time in order to be, in the form of relatively small intervals during which words can be spoken, but it shrinks everything that falls outside of these. As a telescope or a microscope, it gives great details concerning the place where it is focused but it blinds its user to what lies beyond: it reduces man's temporal field of vision. In the case of oral speech, the focal point is what we call the *present*, in both its spatial and temporal sense. Such a focus naturally offers advantages: the immediacy of oral speech allows dialogues, or the rapid propagation of information, for example. It also induces a blindness to what is *non-present*: what is in the past, what is in the future, and what is spatially distant.

Enesto-centrism is thus a *lethe* of the *non-present*, which has the benefit of helping man fully exploit the readiness-to-hand of his immediate environment. His thoughts and actions are focused on his personal experiences, on what he wants to do on the earth. It nonetheless comes with a price: man falls prey to an illusion leading him to believe that the being of beings is equivalent to their being *present*. Heidegger, and several of his followers, have stated that Western thought has fallen prey to such an illusion since the dawn of philosophy, with Plato and Aristotle. According to this view, Western thought would always have considered the being of beings to be: *Anwesen des Anwesenden, Präsenz des Präsenten*,⁵⁹ the presence of what is present. It argues that this answer to the question of the being of beings is a "leap in the dark"⁶⁰ that clouds both this question and the other one that is at the center of his investigations: the question of the essence of being. Derrida agrees with the German philosopher, and he considers that "the history of metaphysics is the history of a determination of being as presence,"⁶¹ but he also pushes the reflection in a new

⁵⁹ GA 7:141.

⁶⁰ TBA. Ibid.

⁶¹ TBA. Original French: ". . . l'histoire de la métaphysique est l'histoire d'une détermination de l'être comme présence. . ." From: Derrida, Jacques. *De la grammatologie*. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967: 145. Print.

direction, explicitly linking this “metaphysics of presence” with the question of the oral dimension of language. According to him, this “metaphysics of presence,” which he sees as still holding sway of the so-called modern Western thinking, is partly the result of “phonocentrism”: “absolute proximity of voice and being, of voice and the meaning of being, of voice and the ideality of meaning.”⁶² Considered only in its oral dimension, language thus produces an enesto-centrism, offering man a narrow view of time.

Orality can therefore deeply affect man’s relation to time, and his vision of the temporal nature of the Φύσις. Man’s being and his language are indeed both inserted in time: they are historical. In order to examine the effect of the orality of man’s language on the temporality and historicity of his being, two different meanings of the word “history” must nonetheless first be clarified, as their distinction will be crucial for the understanding of the following *ek-stasis*.

The English word “history” indeed covers two different concepts, which will first be distinguished in order to give a more precise explanation of man’s relation to it. The most fundamental meaning of the word, corresponding to the German word *Geschichte*,⁶³ normally designates all the events that occurred in the universe. History, in this sense, is not what we can read in our “history books”: it instead is the set of all the events themselves, the temporal evolution of the universe. Seen in its essence, independently from the vision that man has of it, history may thus not necessarily be limited to the past. It is not only *what is happened*, but rather *what has been*, *what is*, and *what will be*. History in this full sense represents the Φύσις, not seen in its *presence*, in the flow of time, but rather as a totality: the skies as a whole, the earth as a whole. Man is part of this history, and he has a portion of it in view. He will nonetheless never see it in its entirety, as he would need to step outside of it in order to be able to do so. History may nevertheless be seen as a central element of man’s destiny. In fact, Heidegger considered history (*Geschichte*) to be the “truth of being,”⁶⁴ the essence of being itself.

⁶² Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. JHU Press, 1998: 12. Print; Original French: “proximité absolue de la voix et de l’être, de la voix et du sens de l’être, de la voix et de l’idéauté du sens.” From: Ibid.:23.

⁶³ The word is related to the verb *Geschehen*: “to happen,” “to occur.”

⁶⁴ TBA. Original German: “Geschichte ist die Wahrheit des Seyns.” From:

History is indeed something more than a mere tool used to guide our ontological development: “beyng is the appropriation of the essence of history.”⁶⁵ This implies that in order for man to truly *be*, he therefore needs to be a historical being, needs to transcend the limits of *presence* and to attempt to see himself in history as a whole. What is historical thus should not be seen as synonymous with what is in the past, but rather seen as what is not limited to the present. Furthermore, man’s vision of history (as *Geschichte*) is shaped by his house of being: just as language decomposes the unintelligible unity of the earth into a multitude of intelligible “things,” it does the same with the skies, and the Φύσις’ temporality, which are transformed into a set of discontinuous historical events, as man cannot fathom them in their entirety and unity.

The second meaning of the word “history,” on the other hand, does not designate a series of events, nor the “timely” nature of the Φύσις, but rather the vision that men have of history, in its first sense. It is the narrative of the events, the things that are present in the world of men and in their history books. German thinkers like Heidegger used the loanword *Historie* to differentiate the events themselves from the narrative through which men view and preserve them. In order to avoid the confusion caused by the ambiguity of the English word “history,” a linguistic distinction will thus be introduced: history is the temporal evolution of the universe, whereas (hi)story is the narrative account by which men represents history, the story of history. The *Historie* of the German tradition nonetheless has a narrower meaning than what will be called (hi)story for the present reading of the biblical narrative. Heidegger defines it as “knowledge of the past, in the service of the future and the present,”⁶⁶ a definition that would appear to be fairly consistent with the normal use of the word, but one that nonetheless will not fit the needs of the present study. In the same manner that the standard definition of history in the previous paragraph was extended so as not to be limited to the past but rather include the entirety of time, the same can be done con-

GA 69:101.

⁶⁵ TBA. Original German: “Das Seyn ist die Ereignung des Wesens der Geschichte.” From: GA 69:97.

⁶⁶ TBA. Original German: “*Was ist Historie?* Die vom Leben (menschlichen) begehrte und gebrauchte Kenntnis des Vergangenen im Dienste der Zukunft und Gegenwart.” From: GA 46: 91.

cerning (hi)story, in order for it to better fit the narrative itself. In the biblical universe, man's (hi)story indeed does not only concern the past and the present: prophecies, and other kinds of revealed knowledge, can represent future events. In this universe, future history can be revealed to man and become part of his (hi)story, making the later not only a repository of memories of the past, but rather the vision that men have of history (*Geschichte*) as a whole, in its totality and oneness: past, present and future.

The relation between time, history and (hi)story provides a basis for man's world. In the words of Heidegger: "'History' (*Geschichte*) is not just the 'object' of (hi)story (*Historie*), but rather the ground of its possibility. Only what is truly historical can be (hi)storical; man is (hi)storical because he is historical, and he is historical because he is 'temporal.'"⁶⁷ For the German philosopher, man is (hi)storical, whereas animals are un-(hi)storical.⁶⁸ All creatures are indeed inserted within history, but only the dwellers of a house of being have a (hi)story. A (hi)story is part of man's world, part of his house of being: it is made by him, according to his will, and like the rest of his world, he is free to ground it in the earth or to tie it to the clouds. Most (hi)stories are meant to reflect history, but it all depends on man's willingness and abilities to make it so. As for the world in general, man can fall prey to the confusion between history and (hi)story, thinking that his narrative of history is equivalent to history itself. The distinction is important because "history is the truth of beyng," whereas (hi)story is not. (Hi)story is rather only a path helping us to get a glimpse of history; to get a glimpse of the temporal nature of beyng, and it thus should not be turned into an idol. Knowledge of a (hi)story should therefore not be confused with the knowledge of history.

How does the fact that the language of the people dwelling in the village of being is exclusively oral affect their relationship with time, history, and (hi)story, and ultimately, through these,

⁶⁷ TBA. The translation translates the German term *Geschichte* as History, and the term *Historie* as (Hi)story. Original German: "»Geschichte« ist nicht nur »Gegenstand« der Historie, sondern Grund ihrer Möglichkeit. Nur was eigentlich geschichtlich ist, kann historisch sein; der Mensch ist historisch, weil er geschichtlich ist, und er ist geschichtlich, weil er »zeitlich« ist." From: GA 46: 93.

⁶⁸ TBA. Original German: "der Mensch ist historisch, das Tier unhistorisch." From: GA 46: 91.

man's relation to his essential being? Firstly, the aforementioned peculiarities of oral languages imply that man's (hi)story would have a very limited scope, in terms of the volume of events it can include, of their level of details, or in terms of physical and temporal distance, since oral transmission is always impeded by linguistic decay. In such circumstances, man's (hi)story will thus be marked by *presence*: the farther an event is, the less it will mark (hi)story, and the less reliable the account of it will be. The (hi)story given to man by his forefathers could be rooted in the clouds, or be a precisely grounded description of history. In both cases, man will not have any means to ascertain the veracity of what he received. The speech of past generations and distant peoples is forever lost in time, having left no trace on earth, but only an imprint on the world, through memory and tradition. The earth is deaf and dumb. Man may scrutinize it to find the remnants of past events, ancient civilizations, and strange cultures, but the (re)construction of such (hi)stories from these traces will always be similar to an attempt at entering into a dialogue with a headless man, as the remnants are forever cut off from their world. The vestiges left by oral peoples indeed only form the earthly roots of their world, which wasted away with the death of their members.

Oral (hi)story is thus hardly distinguishable from oral stories, something that may nonetheless be seen as having certain advantages: without a reliable (hi)story, man may then concentrate his attention on his own experience, on what he sees with his own eyes, rather than on what he hears from others. He may grow suspicious of speech, and suspicious of the world in general, as it may lack proper grounding. He may instead pursue his own investigation of the earth, not taking the world given to him through language as a revealed truth, and instead strive to find out a proper earthly ground for what it depicts. As the 15th fragment of Heraclitus says: Ὀφθαλμοὶ τῶν ὧτων ἀκριβέστεροι μάρτυρες, "Eyes are more accurate witnesses than the ears."⁶⁹ The era of oral language is thus firstly an era of grounding of the world. As the ears are a poor witness, man is forced to use his eyes. He is incited to refrain from blindly basing his world on tradition, and he is instead encouraged to question it, and to constantly return to the earth. Orality can

⁶⁹ Original Greek from: Hippocrates, and Heracleitus. *Hippocrates, Volume IV: Nature of Man*. Trans. W. H. S. Jones. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931: 474. Print; Translation from: Ibid.: 475.

thus be seen as a safeguard against the clouding of the world of the early men of the narrative: without a reliable (hi)story, man has to look at the event themselves to build his world. He has to keep looking at the earth and the skies. Members of oral peoples will thus have a strong and direct relation to the events, to history, without seeing these events through the length of a universal and totalizing (hi)story.

Engulfed in *presence*, man's vision of the portion of history that he personally experiences will thus be deeply rooted in the earth. It will nonetheless also be extremely narrow. Indeed, it is only through (hi)story that man can get a glimpse of the fullness of history: without it, he is limited to his own experience, to what is or has been experienced as *present* to him. His being is seen as limited to this presence: the past does not "exist," and thus it "is" not. Presence denies the non-present, and the unity of the Φύσις, which encompasses all of its dimensions. This *lethe* of the non-present, partly induced by the orality of language, thus limits man's capacity to be a fully historical being, someone who has a clear vision of the temporality of the universe. Seeing only what is *present*, man will not only fail to see the fullness of history, he will also fail to see the essence of the being of beings, and of being itself. What *is* becomes a shorthand for what *is present*: the past is not anymore, the future has yet to be, and both are wrongly perceived as being outside the realm of what is "real," of what "exists." Such a view of history and being may be considered natural, as man experiences the phenomenon of time only as present, but he nonetheless also has a world that can allow him to transcend this *presence* through language, by the use of memory and revelations.

The world is what gives man the possibility to see beyond to present, toward eternity, to use the same word as S^t Thomas Aquinas: "present, past and future do not exist in eternity, which . . . is instantaneously whole."⁷⁰ To escape presence is to perceive the oneness of time and thus the oneness of history, that is, to perceive that it is not a mere series of moving points on a time-line, but rather a continuous totality. This is true for the earth, which

⁷⁰ Original Latin: "Praeterea, in aeternitate non est praesens, praeteritum vel futurum, cum sit tota simul, ut dictum est." From: Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae: Volume 2, Existence and Nature of God: 1a. 2-11*. Cambridge University Press, 2006: 139. Print. (Summa 1a q10,2 4); English translation from: Ibid.: 138.

is visible under the skies, but it is also true for the world. All the houses of being forming the village are also part of this totality: the (hi)story of the world of the narrative is one. The universe of the meta-narrative is indeed more than a set of scattered houses built on the surface of the earth. Its temporal nature makes it akin to a growing tree, which begins to grow with deep roots into the earth, with the pre-linguistic Adam, and then continues with a trunk, the house of Adam that sheltered mankind until the confusion. After Babel, the trunk ramifies into a multitude of branches, each of which continues to grow, producing buds, leaves, and flowers that wither with the passing of the seasons, the work of the skies.

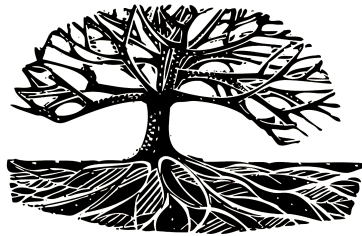


Fig. 13 *The old tree*. The roots of the tree are lost in the earth, but they nonetheless continue to nourish it, allowing the strengthening of its trunk, which in turn provides support for the branches. Separated from one another, each branch occupies a portion of the skies, and continuously grows, receiving the light of the sun while waiting for the spring, the time when the leaves and the flowers will transform the tree, from a skeleton to a complete and harmonious body.

The world-tree is more than a succession of discontinuous layers. It forms an organic structure, a totality that must be seen in its entirety if one is to perceive its nature, its origin, and its purpose. This is the view that the Deity has of time and history, a view that man can share, to a limited extent, through the gift of language, which opens up a world that can reveal to him the fact that the past and the future *are* as much as the present, and that the tree should not be cut into a series of horizontal, that is, synchronic segments, if one wishes to perceive its true nature,

as a central element of the Φύσις. Oral language nonetheless only allows man to extract himself from *presence* in a trivial manner, as the unreliability and indirect nature of the oral tradition incite man to focus on what he experienced personally. The Deity, however, will soon give him the means to achieve a real *ek-stasis* from presence, thereby inviting him to build a broader (hi)story, which may subsequently allow him to get a fuller view of history and a better perception of the nature of being. This means will come, once again, from a transformation of man's language.

4.2.5 The emergence of literacy

The appearance of writing in the biblical narrative can seem to be very inconspicuous, as its first mention does not describe its origin, its creator, or its purpose, but rather only consists in an exhortation to record a series of events so that they would be remembered by future generations. Writing appears as a ready-to-hand instrument in the service of man. In the following pages, we will attempt to discern what lays hidden behind this low-key emergence, starting with an exploration of the nature of this new form of language, so that the impact that this emergence will later have on the village of being of the meta-narrative can be more clearly perceived.

4.2.5.1 The earthly and heavenly nature of writing and literacy

The omnipresence of writing in our daily life can lead us to forget the incredible contrast that the written word offers in comparison to the spoken one. As said by Gadamer:

Nothing is so strange, and at the same time so demanding, as the written word. Not even meeting speakers of a foreign language can be compared with this strangeness, since the language of gesture and of sound is always in part immediately intelligible. The written word and what partakes of it — literature — is the intelligibility of mind transferred to the most alien medium.⁷¹

⁷¹ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2 Revised edition. New York:

To see the place of literacy in the meta-narrative, the nature of this medium must first be contemplated, in both its earthly/heavenly dimensions on the one hand and its worldly one on the other. It must also be put in relation with another medium: orality. Both forms of language are rooted in the earth and the skies. They are not pure products of the world. This dual root will now be examined in order to highlight the fundamental differences between the two mediums, also presenting the changes that the emergence induces on the houses of being of the meta-narrative.

Oral speech occurs in the air, that is, the ether, the spirit, as an element that is both earthly and heavenly: it is an element composed of matter from the earth, suspended in the space of the skies. The air is nonetheless only the medium where oral speech can occur. It is only a frame where a canvas can be fixed, and this canvas is the voice. The voice is the canvas, the secondary medium of oral speech. In linguistics, the voice is commonly designated as the “vowel sounds” of a language, and technically defined as “one of a class of speech sounds in the articulation of which the oral part of the breath channel is not blocked and is not constricted enough to cause audible friction; *broadly*: the one most prominent sound in a syllable.”⁷² The last part of the definition betrays a fundamental flaw of the classic meta-physical model of language: the vowel is not a simple contrasting element to the consonant, but rather the basis of speech, what allows the other sounds to be uttered. Consonants and vowels are not two equal elements facing each other in syllables because there cannot be any consonant without the voice, without the vowels, whereas there can be vowels without consonants.

The voice is the medium, the canvas, the flow of the spirit

Bloomsbury Academic, 2004: 156. Print; Original German: “Es gibt nichts so Fremdes und zugleich Verständnisforderndes wie Schrift. Nicht einmal die Begegnung mit Menschen fremder Zunge kann mit dieser Fremdheit und Befremdung verglichen werden, da die Sprache der Gebärde und des Tones immer schon ein Moment von unmittelbarer Verständlichkeit enthält Schrift und was an ihr teil hat, die Literatur, ist die ins Fremdeste entäußerte Verständlichkeit des Geistes. Nichts ist so sehr reine Geistesspur wie Schrift, nichts aber auch so auf den verstehenden Geist angewiesen wie sie.” From: Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gesammelte Werke: Band 1: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. A. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010: 168–169. Print.

⁷² “Vowel.” *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary*. Web. 8 Oct. 2016.

going through the air, but the consonants are only restrictions of this flow, bits of silence and distortions altering the way the voice is propagated in the ether. This can be related to the insufflation of the “breath of life” (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים) into the nostrils of Adam by the Deity,⁷³ marking the birth of man as a living being: the breath, the voice, the spirit, are the foundation of life and of oral speech. The heavenly nature of oral language should nonetheless be considered according to its dual component: the skies are both time and space, even though the two form a continuum. The spatial component of the skies is, of course, necessary in order for oral speech to occur, as speech needs the air in order to be materialized and be propagated, but it nevertheless only plays a minor role in the nature of orality. Space could be reduced to a singularity, and speech would still be conceivable, but this would not be the case with time. In technical language, speech can be represented as a wave, whose frequency defines the linguistic content that it carries. These waves need an amplitude, corresponding to a spatial movement, but the main information carrier of oral speech is a series of frequencies, that is, a measurement according to the time-dimension. This technical aspect should nonetheless not cloud our vision of the heavenly nature of speech: it is only a means given to us so that we can perceive the fact that orality is inherently rooted in time, leaving the spatial component of the skies relatively untouched by language. This aspect of language as it is used by the men of the narrative until their arrival at Mount Sinai may appear rather trivial, but the following pages will attempt to show that it is a crucial element showing the purpose of literacy in the divine plan depicted by the narrative.

With an exclusively oral world, the house of being only stands if living men sustain it; if they hold its structure by a continuous preservation of their language in their memory. If a part of the house is forgotten or uninhabited for even the slightest amount of time, it crumbles into oblivion, never to be recovered. The house is built without any cement, and men need to support the blocks by their own forces in order to be able to preserve it, and pass it on as an inheritance to their descendants. No part of the house can remain uninhabited. It needs the living at all times, making it both very flexible and self-renewing, but also very vulnerable and evanescent. The tradition that is passed on is thus constrained by

⁷³ Gen 2:7.

man's limited memory and cognitive capabilities, and only what is deemed important to each generation remains in the house.

The written word that appears at Sinai represents a new medium where language can grow, in a new form: not carried in the air, but rather etched in the earth. The first mention of writing is an exhortation to write a סֵפֶר [sēp̄er], a document in the form of a leather scroll or a papyrus book.⁷⁴ The leather, paper, wax, or stone are all earthly. The earth is thus used as a canvas in the same way that the voice is used as the canvas of oral speech. The earthly canvas is usually bright-colored, reflecting light as much as possible. As the voice is the result of the "breath of life," the canvas of the written word is also the product of the divinely initiated Φύσις: is it the earth, the matter created by the Deity and given to mankind. The writing itself is done by covering the canvas, thereby affecting the way it reflects light: either by applying a dark ink, by chipping away a block of stone, or by forming ridges with the tip of a stylus. In contrast with the physical canvas, writing is the product of the world and of the Τέχνη.

The two types of canvases are nonetheless of a different nature: the voice is a fruit of the spirit, a living canvas, whereas the earthly canvas of writing is inert, the product of man's hands, which shape the earth in the form of leather scrolls, paper books, or clay tablets. Writing is a voiceless language, an inert language, though not in any pejorative sense. This absence of the voice is remarkably reflected by the writing system of this part of the narrative, the paleo-Hebrew alphabet, which is both the system that would be used by Moses to write the first document mentioned in the Bible and the system used to write the narrative itself. The early Hebrew alphabet used to write the book of Moses is almost purely consonantal,⁷⁵ leaving the vowels unwritten, left to be determined by the reader as he attempts to decipher the document, bringing it back to life. We have seen that the vowels represent the voice, the "breath of life" that allows oral speech. The written documents in the narrative, and also the narrative itself until appearance of the New Testament, are thus voiceless, inert. The

⁷⁴ Exo 17:14.

⁷⁵ The Hebrew alphabet nonetheless possesses two characters for semi-vowels, yod (י) and waw (ו), which can also be used to represent the vowels i and u.

written consonants are the product of the Τέχνη, on a canvas which is itself partly the product of the Τέχνη, formed by man's hands from the earth. Writing is man's creation, unlike oral speech, which was given to man by the Deity. This may explain why the narrative is silent concerning its genesis, and why the Deity merely commands its first use in the narrative, rather than use it itself at this point.

The written Hebrew documents nevertheless need vowels, that is, they need a voice in order to be read, be it audible physically or simply in the mind, showing that the written word contains *the trace of an absence*, which needs a *presence* in order for its meaning to appear. This does not necessarily imply that writing would be a deficient medium that would be entirely dependent on oral speech, or simply a means for its transcription. The consonantal writing of the narrative does not imply a phonocentric worldview, as we will see, as each of the two mediums has a place in the divine plan.

Another aspect of the written word is its different relation to the skies. The canvas of the written word is earthly, composed of matter, but writing is also heavenly. Oral speech, as seen earlier, is essentially grounded in the temporal component of the skies. The written word, on the other hand, is grounded in space. Time can be reduced to a singularity, and a written document could still *be* and be read, but this would not be the case if space was reduced in such a manner. Writing is extensional,⁷⁶ it needs a space in order to emerge, but it does not need to occupy a specific period of time in order to *be*. Letters and words are painted on the canvas, and they remain on it, contrary to the evanescent oral speech. Space can be largely irrelevant for the utterance of spoken words, as their meaning is mainly deployed in time, as a changing wave in the air. Time, however, cannot be ignored, as oral speech is present only at a fixed moment in time, fading away soon after it is uttered. Writing, on the other hand, is far less affected by time: the ink dries, the clay is fired, but the letters are preserved, and they will often remain on the canvas long after their author has returned to the earth. However, whereas oral speech is propagated in all spatial directions, being audible in different places at the same time, a written text occupies a precise location in space, and it can only be read there. The physical boundaries delimited by the

⁷⁶ In the philosophical sense, as "occupying a portion of space."

ink or the stylus, separating the canvas from the letters, constitute the essence of the written word, and these boundaries are spatial ones. Writing represents an appropriation of space, like oral speech represents an appropriation of time. The advent of writing thus does not only mark the invention of a medium for the recording of oral speech, but it also marks the emergence of the possibility for man to see his relation to his being transformed.

The first possibility offered by literacy, the capacity to transcribe oral speech, directly and profoundly affects the structure of the house. It forms a cement allowing parts of the house to stand on their own, even when no one supports them. With writing, language can be externalized and inscribed on the earth, thereby bypassing the need to rely on the human mind for its preservation. A manuscript can lay hidden in a cave for a thousand years and then be recovered, deciphered, and once again become part of the living language of men. This means that parts of the house of being can become uninhabited, be hidden from the living, but nevertheless remain, standing. Such uninhabited parts are nonetheless not themselves part of the living language of men while they remain uninhabited, as they have no impact on human life.

The transfer of oral speech into written words, that is, the use of a cement on blocks of the house, nevertheless does not imply that these blocks would be permanently present. The cement is the earthly support of writing, found in the leather scroll and the ink, or the tablet and its carving. This support needs to be preserved in order for the structure they form to stand. Literacy thus operates a displacement: the reliance on human memory is transformed into a reliance on an earthly material. This allows man to transcend certain limits of his mind, but it also makes parts of the house of being dependent on the earth and the skies, which can both bring their own dangers for the preservation of the house. The human mind may indeed in some cases be more resistant to the elements than paper or clay, in floods or frost, for example. This trade-off allows the creation of a linguistic reserve, a *Bestand*: it gives man the possibility to continuously (re)dis-cover hidden parts of the house of being. It also allows him to “cement” new ones, which he could not support all by himself, without interruption. Before writing, man had to build everything by himself in order to extend or change his house of being. In other words, he needed to proceed to a *poiesis*, creating new signs from the earth or the world. The

written word now gives him the possibility to access a reserve of sign-blocks, and even to dwell in entirely new parts of the house, without the need to rely on *poiesis*, as he can in-voke the dormant poetic work of other men, from other times.

The reserve of signs brought by writing marks a strengthening of tradition, which can now be greatly expanded and made more durable. The walls of the houses of being are less prone to erosion because of the use of this reserve or of the work of the skies, of time and the elements. The limit of this reserve is equal to the limit of what can be inscribed in the earth, which is almost infinite from a human point of view. This reserve should nevertheless not be seen as completely separate from the house. The uninhabited sections of the house must indeed be directly connected to the house of the living, otherwise, men would have no way of accessing them. A written text needs to be related to the language(s) of its reader in order to “make sense.” A tradition must link the written signs and the house of being in order for it to be integrated as a new part of the house.⁷⁷ This link does not have to be oral: a manuscript can explain the meaning of the signs of another, initially undecipherable manuscript, thereby allowing the new signs to regain a place in the house.

Written signs may nonetheless become orphaned. They may become signifiers with undetermined signifieds, which would therefore not be fully part of the house. The biblical text itself contains several examples of such orphaned signs, in the Old Testament in particular, due to the fact that Hebrew was a so-called “dead language” for a considerable amount of time, and to the scarcity of extra-biblical Hebrew literature, which induced a partial crumbling of the Hebrew tradition. The meaning of many words of the narrative is now lost, because their transmission was interrupted.

⁷⁷ For example, what allowed the deciphering of Egyptian hieroglyphic writings was the discovery of the famous Rosetta stone, which gave scholars bilingual inscriptions allowing them to establish a link between their house of being and the one of the Ancient Egyptians. This ancient house could then be re-discovered through translation. Many other abandoned houses of being nonetheless remain inaccessible to us. The language of the Indus valley civilization or the Vinča script of Old Europe, for example, have been passed on to us as a set of written inscriptions, but as no link exists between these inscriptions and one of the houses of being currently inhabited, the doors of the houses of the Indus valley and Vinča thus remain shut, and what they contain may forever be lost.

Their signifiers have been preserved, but their signifieds have fallen into oblivion.⁷⁸ This shows that the necessity of tradition, and the necessity of its continuity, have not been made void by the advent of writing.

The tradition has nonetheless gained flexibility, as it can be put into writing and can lie dormant, waiting to be unearthed. Such an unearthing, that is, the reading and interpreting of a text, can also in itself be a form of *poiesis*, as the interpreter is forced to fill the gap left between what the text says and what the text means, between the written signs and the intention of their author, the one who shaped them from the earth and brought them to the world through *poiesis*. This limited form of *poiesis*, the filling of the gap, gains prominence with the advent of writing. After a certain amount of time, so many signs have been created and been written down that man may tend to always look for pre-existing works in order to express his will, what he wants to express, thereby overlooking the raw *poiesis* altogether. The enlargement of the tradition brought by literacy induces an inertia: as the world gets larger and is filled with all kinds of “things,” man is at risk of being cut off from the earth by forgetting the *poiesis*, forgetting to witness the direct link between earth and world, which is an essential part of his human nature. This danger, however, once again does not imply that literacy is only a tool leading man to be a servant of the Τέχνη, as contrary to the opinion of Saussure and many of his contemporaries, writing is more than a means to record and preserve oral speech.

Writing’s relationship with space is more complex than oral speech’s relationship with time. The new medium takes advantage of the multidimensionality of space, in a way that is not possible with time, which is one-dimensional. Writing is not only a painting, based on the contrast between an ink and a piece of paper, but rather a complex multi-leveled structure, itself inserted into a multidimensional space. The most basic element in this struc-

⁷⁸ The exact meaning of many words in the Hebrew parts of the narrative have indeed been lost, especially in the books using less commonly used words for poetic effects, such as the book of Job or the Psalms. An example of a word whose meaning is still subject to debate is the word פִּסַּס [pissat] in Psa 72:16, which may possibly mean “abundance,” but whose meaning is far from certain. The presence of numerous words only used a single time in the Bible, and never seen in other Hebrew writings, makes the meaning of these words difficult to ascertain.

ture is the stroke, which is used to form the most basic meaningful written signs: the glyphs, that is, letters, logograms, or ideograms. The strokes forming a glyph are usually ordered so as to maintain a greater consistency. These strokes are systematically bounded, restricted to a conventional space, often visible in children's writing books all over the earth in the form of small rectangles, which indicate the limits given for a single glyph. A one-dimensional glyph is conceivable, like a Morse code written on a straight line, and so is a three-dimensional one, which could exploit stereoscopic vision or the sense of touch.

It would nonetheless seem that the glyphs used to write the languages of mankind are all using two-dimensional glyphs.⁷⁹ Once properly inscribed on the canvas, a glyph is more often than not followed by another, whose meaning is combined with the preceding one to form a word or a sentence. This assembly is also fixed by tradition and shaped by the constraints of the medium: the two-dimensional glyphs are themselves put on a (one-dimensional) line, following one another. This line is bounded by the limits of the canvas. Within them, it can nonetheless take any shape or direction. This linearity of the glyph assembly may appear similar to the linear nature of oral speech, which itself originates in the linear nature of time. This could nonetheless be misleading, because even though the inscription of the glyphs can always be seen a following a line, as crooked as it may be, an important difference is the fact that the line followed by the reader while deciphering the inscription might differ significantly from the writing line. In oral speech, the hearer will hear the speech exactly as it was spoken, with the sounds, words, and sentences following a fixed order. In writing, this is not necessarily the case. The reading line can

⁷⁹ One dimensional or pseudo one dimensional writings system have been used in the past. The tying of knots on ropes is one of them, one which is referred to in Laozi's *Dao.de.jing*, in the context of the description of an ideal country: 小國寡民使有什伯之器而不用。使民重死而不遠徙。雖有舟輿，無所乘之。雖有甲兵，無所乘之。使人復結繩而用之。 "Keep the kingdom small, its people few; / Make sure they have no use for tools / That do the work of tens or hundreds. / Nor let the people travel far / And leave their homes and risk their lives. / Boat or cart, if kept at all, best not to ride; / Shield and blade best not to show. / Guide them back to early times, / When knotted cords served for signs" (Chinese original from: 阿部吉雄。《新釈漢文大系〈7〉老子 莊子上卷》。東京：明治書院，1966：128。；English translation from: Laozi. *Dao De Jing: The Book of the Way*. Trans. Moss Roberts. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004: 186. Print.)

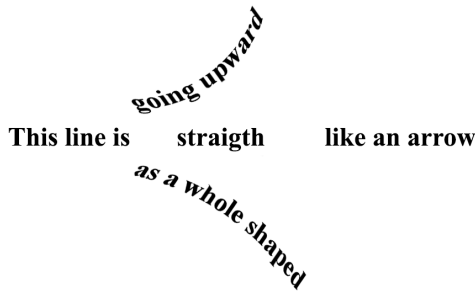


Fig. 14 *Broken line.*

be made to appear broken, for example:

Reading this sentence, one may follow different reading lines, therefore reading it in a different order than it was written. Such a choice is not possible with oral speech, as it is a direct product of the multidimensionality of the canvas of writing. Such peculiarities of the written word have for a long time remained unnoticed. Derrida was one of the pioneers who helped uncover them by pointing out certain weaknesses of an extreme phonocentric view, among which is the fact that writing is not just a tool to transcribe and conserve oral speech: it can indeed also bring something more to man's language.⁸⁰ The aforementioned example may appear trivial, but it is just the simplest demonstration of the way by which writing can surpass oral speech, thereby shaking the assumption of the supremacy of orality, and showing that literacy brings something more to language than its mere fixation, a fact that is important in order to discern the significance of the advent of writing in the meta-narrative.

The emergence of literacy can thus profoundly change man's relationship with language in general, and it can also affect the nature of the house of being in ways less simple than it could appear at first glance. Historically, one of the most common visions of writing has been to see it as a way to preserve oral speech, a vision shared by Saussure: "Language [*Langue*] and writing are two distinct sign-systems; the sole purpose of the latter is to represent

⁸⁰ Derrida, Jacques. *De la grammatologie*. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967. Print.

the former.”⁸¹ The fact that the transcription of oral speech is indeed one of the possible uses of literacy is undeniable. This rather obvious use should nonetheless not lead us to ignore the fact that writing offers more possibilities than being a mere “clothing of oral speech,”⁸² to borrow a metaphor from the Swiss professor. The written word is indeed a cement for the house of being, but cement does not only allow existing structures to stand on their own: it also allows new types of structures to be built. The advent of writing in the narrative only marks the starting point of this new “art,” which constitutes a means for the extension of language toward a new dimension.

Parts of the house of being can indeed only be built with the “cement” of writing, an example of which is the possibility of the separation and isolation of the consonantal part of language, that is, its component arising as a product of the Τέχνη, from the living voice: the vowels which are a fruit of the Φύσις. This isolation is made possible by writing and exemplified by the paleo-Hebrew alphabet, in which the first part of the narrative is written, an alphabet which is almost exclusively consonantal.⁸³ Men always had a tendency to compare or to oppose oral speech and writing, so as to determine which one should be the supreme lord of language, ruling over all its forms. Saussure argued for the supremacy of oral speech, and in reaction to this excess, Derrida attempted to reverse this hierarchy. This opposition may nonetheless be seen as futile, simply because it lacks ground. The two are not necessarily opposed, and may rather only be extensions of one another in a new domain. For a deaf-mute who has learned language in a

⁸¹ TBA. Original French: “Langue et écriture sont deux systèmes de signes distincts; l’unique raison d’être du second est de représenter le premier.” From: Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Cours de linguistique générale*. Lausanne: Payot, 1985: 45. Print; Such a phonocentrism is nonetheless not a modern idea, and traces of it can be found knitted in the very fabric of some languages, as in Syriac, in which the term for “word,” oral or written, is ܒܬܐܬܐ [bat qālā], which literally means “daughter of the voice.”

⁸² Derrida, Jacques. *De la grammatologie*. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967: 52. Print.

⁸³ In turn, the written alphabet will also influence oral speech, as demonstrated in the vision of S^t John described in the book of Revelation, when the son of man declares: “ἐγὼ τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω,” “I am the alpha and the omega,” that is, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (Rev 1:8, 21:6, and 22:13). Writing and oral speech can thus both be mirrors of each other, and they can allow man to transcend the limits of each medium, as both are subjected to different constraints.

written form, the dis-discovery of oral speech would form a clearing, as it is the case for a hearing man dis-discovering literacy.

One of the new possibilities offered by the written word is a greater ability for abstract thinking. According to Husserl, writing is a condition for the possibility of ideal objects.⁸⁴ Gadamer also remarks that “Leibniz’s claim that the *characteristica universalis* is an *ars inveniendi* clearly depends on the artificiality of its symbols. This is what makes calculation possible.”⁸⁵ This shows the link between writing and the appearance of new forms of knowledge, such as modern symbolic calculus, which would hardly be conceivable in oral form. What is pointed out by the narrative only represents the seed of the possibilities offered by the new medium, many of which have yet to be explored.

Heidegger made contributions to the study of the nature of the written word by uncovering some interesting properties associated with it, properties that are unparalleled in oral speech. One of these is the concept of *sous-rature*, often attributed to Derrida, who later developed it as *trace*, a concept that nonetheless finds its source in the work of the German philosopher. It designates the crossing out of words, such as ~~this~~ in order to mark the inadequacy of a word, or a change of mind from the author. The crossing-out is nonetheless not an erasure, because the word underneath is still readable. The point is to indicate the presence of an absence, or an absence of presence: the imprint of the word remains in order to point out the imperfection of the sign to the reader, a sign that partly fails in linking the signifier to the intended signified. Heidegger used this concept in order to talk about ~~being~~, that is, about the fact that what we call ~~being~~ can’t be properly designated

⁸⁴ Derrida, Jacques. *De la grammatologie*. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967: 42–43. Print. “L’écriture n’est pas seulement un moyen auxiliaire au service de la science — et éventuellement son objet — mais d’abord, comme l’a en particulier rappelé Husserl, dans *L’origine de la géométrie*, la condition de possibilité des objets idéaux et donc de l’objectivité scientifique.”

⁸⁵ Italics added. From: Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2 Revised edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004: 415. Print.; Original German: “Es ist wohl klar, daß ein solcher Anspruch der *characteristica universalis*, eine *ars inveniendi* zu sein, wie ihn Leibniz erhebt, gerade auf der Künstlichkeit dieser Symbolik beruht. Sie ermöglicht ein Rechnen . . .” From: Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gesammelte Werke: Band 1: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. A. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010: 420. Print.

with our present terminology.⁸⁶ The trace left by the crossing-out is itself a way to improve language, by showing certain of its inadequacies. It represents a new type of signs, new rooms of the house of being, which would not be possible with oral speech.

In order to create a trace, a *sous-rature*, one must be able to return and modify what has been said: the word must first have been written in order for the *rature*⁸⁷ to be made. This is not possible with oral speech, because of its “timely” nature. The linearity of time and the evanescent nature of oral speech indeed imply that one cannot modify what has been said. Spoken words cannot be crossed out and made to remain as a *trace*. The spatial nature of the written words nonetheless allows such a transformation: one can go back and cross-out words at will, and even make them unreadable if one wants it. Writing thus allows a new type of signs, the building of new sign-blocks of the house of being. It operates a clearing, extending language beyond the limits of orality, and it therefore is not a mere mirror, a tool for transcription. Writing, however, is not directly given to man by the Deity. It comes to *be* through the work of men who were masters of the art of poetry, the art of creating “things” in the world from an earthly material. The genesis of writing is thus very similar to the construction of the house of being itself: it occurs through an act of *poiesis*.

4.2.5.2 *Poiesis* of the written sign

The genesis of the first oral signs of the biblical universe is described in the beginning of the narrative, a genesis which has been described in the second chapter, with the onomastic covenant in particular. Adam had a prominent role in the *poiesis* of this oral tongue, as he was encouraged by the Deity to shape the earth and bring it to the world, to bring it to oral language. The story of the genesis of the first written sign of the narrative has nonetheless been left untold. This absence is even more conspicuous considering the seemingly deliberate inconspicuousness of the advent of

⁸⁶ GA 9: 385.

⁸⁷ The French word *rature* has sometimes been translated as “erasure,” but its original meaning does not directly indicate that something has been erased. On the contrary, it explicitly designates a visible mistake in writing, and its crossing-out. The verb *rater* also generally designates the act of failing to do something.

writing in the narrative. Nothing is said of the first writing system, of its inventor, or of the way the first signs were made. The reader is only given the signs in which the narrative itself is written, which, we can presume, are the same as the ones used in the Sinai narrative. This writing system is the paleo-Hebrew alphabet, a set of 22 signs, all consonants, each designating a particular sound.⁸⁸ The following table shows the glyphs of this first writing of the narrative:

Paleo Hebrew						
Aramaic Script						
Name	ʾālep	bēt	gīml	dālet	hē	wāw
Meaning	ox	house	camel	door	window	hook
Phonetic Value	ʾ [ʔ]	b [b]	g [g]	d [d]	h [h]	w [w]

Paleo Hebrew						
Aramaic Script						
Name	zayin	ḥēt	ṭēt	yōd	kāp	lāmed
Meaning	weapon	wall, courtyard	wheel	hand	palm (of a hand)	goad
Phonetic Value	ṭ [tʰ]	y [j]	k [k]	l [l]	m [m]	n [n]

⁸⁸ It should be noted that the paleo-Hebrew script is not the one in which the Old Testament usually appears, as it was later supplanted by the so-called “Aramaic script,” which is the one standardly used in modern times.

Paleo Hebrew	𐤀	𐤁	𐤂	𐤃	𐤄	𐤅
Aramaic Script	ܡ	ܢ	ܣ	ܥ	ܦ	ܨ
Name	mēm	nūn	šāmek	ʿayin	pē	ḡādē
Meaning	water	snake	support	eye	mouth	hunt
Phonetic Value	m [m]	n [n]	s [s]	[ʕ]	p [p]	ṣ [sʕ]

Paleo Hebrew	𐤆	𐤇	𐤈	𐤉
Aramaic Script	ק	ר	ש	ת
Name	qōp	rēš	šin	tāw
Meaning	Needle head	head	tooth	mark
Phonetic Value	q [q]	r [r]	š [ʃ]	t [t]

Table 1: The Hebrew writing systems

The written signs in this table, like every oral word, are the result of a *poiesis*, a process initiated when the earth is brought to the world, that is, when the phenomenon is used to form a meta-physical linguistic sign. In the case of the paleo-Hebrew writing system, the “direct” earthly nature of the signifier can sometimes be easily spotted, the most obvious of them probably being the *ʿayin* glyph, designating the first letter of the word for “eye” while being shaped in the form of an eye:𐤃. Earthly forms are thus used to create linguistic signs in the world. Such signs could nevertheless also be rooted directly in the world, or even be random. Signs grounded in the earth are onomatopoeias if they are oral, and ideograms if they are written.

The paleo-Hebrew writing seems to have an ideographic origin, like most of the first historical writing systems: Sumerian cuneiform, Egyptian hieroglyphs, Chinese or Maya ideograms. In almost all of these systems, the ideographic nature of the signs has nonetheless been eroded by the work of time, and most glyphs slowly became pure logograms, that is, they became symbols that

cannot be directly linked with what they originally visually represented, what was their earthly inspiration. The aforementioned *ayin* is a good example of this phenomenon. Few would indeed identify the ʾ glyph as representing an eye. Time thus renders the signs grounded in the earth indistinguishable from those grounded in the world or in randomness. Could this have an ill effect on mankind? Perhaps not inherently, but the grounding of the signs in the earth, as seen earlier, can help man to ground his world in the same soil, and thereby prevent an illusory grounding in the clouds of “metaphysics.” For similar reasons, Derrida considered that ideographic writing systems, Chinese in particular, could help man to free himself from the woes of the so-called “Western metaphysics.”⁸⁹ The Algerian philosopher nonetheless did not envision the fact that when reading Chinese, one does not think of the ideographic meaning of the glyph, just as someone does not decompose the sound of each letter when reading an English word: using either system, a reader recognizes words in their entirety, in a reflex-like manner, without conscious thought.⁹⁰ Only when creating glyphs, or learning those whose origin is still known, are we really in contact with the *poetic* process. Therefore, in order for a language to be properly and continuously grounded, it would have to be in a state of perpetual transformation. Man would have to keep creating or changing signs, and be conscious of the need to shape them from an earthly substance. Such a process could safeguard him from the dangers of the clouds, more efficiently than any ideographic writing handed over by tradition. Time thus affects writing, by taking it away from the earth, and elevating it towards the clouds, in a cycle:

Earth > Ideogram > Logogram > Clouds
Poiesis

In order to avoid the clouding of his world, man can return to the *poiesis*, that is, he can re-create signs by re-extracting their source material directly from the earth and bringing them to the world in

⁸⁹ Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Corrected edition. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998: 79. Print.

⁹⁰ The Chinese system is also more dependent on oral tradition, as the pronunciation of the ideograms usually cannot be inferred without having been previously learned, orally in ancient times when no standard phonetic transcription existed.

a grounded manner, rather than in a clouded one. In the narrative, however, the writing that appears at Sinai is already the result of a mature tradition, which already moved far away from the *poiesis* from which it originated.

Literacy can nonetheless not be reduced to *poiesis*, which takes the earth to the world. By the act of writing, man also brings a part of the world (back) to the earth. He transforms a metaphysical, worldly representation into a physical phenomenon: a sound wave in the air, or a carving on the earth. In the case of a simple ideogram, representing an earthly object, the representation shares a visual similarity with the original object. Furthermore, the writing system of the narrative possesses a different and noteworthy characteristic: its glyphs originally may have represented earthly objects or beings, but what these ideographic signifiers designate are not the things after which they are modeled, as it is the case with most early Chinese ideograms, for example. Instead, the glyphs designate basic sounds of the oral language of the Hebrews. The ^ʿayin may look like an eye, and the word for an eye may start with this glyph, but it does not designate an eye in itself, rather only a way a speaker constricts the airflow in his throat. Why is it noteworthy?

The appearance of phonetic writing demonstrates the existence of a reflection on oral language. The *poiesis* of the consonantal glyphs of the early Hebrews is metalinguistic in nature, showing that their creator(s) saw oral language not only as a ready-to-hand tool, whose nature is masked by its use, but also saw it in its presence-at-hand, as a “thing” whose nature can be scrutinized. This writing system shows a separation between the vowels, left unwritten, and the consonants: the first being the fruit of the Φύσις, and the second the product of the Τέχνη. This metalinguistic awareness can be considered, in the narrative, to be the result of the encounter with the unintelligible, which, as seen in the third chapter, has the effect of unconcealing the presence-at-hand of the oral language. This consonantal writing is thus inherently technical: it uses the insights brought by a presence-at-hand of language to produce a system for the transcription of oral speech using a minimum number of glyphs. This system demands a greater level of abstraction compared to a purely ideographic one, but it requires far less time in order to be mastered.

The 22 glyphs of the paleo-Hebrew alphabet can indeed be sufficient in order for a Hebrew speaker to express himself in writing, whereas thousands of characters could be needed if ideograms were used.⁹¹ With a phonetic writing, the creation of new signs, that is, the *poiesis* of new written words, remains bounded by the structure of its system: to coin a new sign is to coin a new combination of pre-existing glyphs. The new signs are built from the basic elements of the writing system, that is, from the world. They cannot be directly grounded in the earth, as with true ideograms, for example.⁹² The *poiesis* of the written word of the Hebrews is thus only a secondary one. Man cannot create new glyphs, under normal circumstances, and he only arranges those given to him by tradition. The creator of the alphabet may have grounded it in the earth, but this ground progressively became invisible to those inheriting the system.

One may then ask why should writing be grounded in the Φύσις? Such a grounding, in the earth, in the skies, is not a simple aesthetic mimesis, the mimicking of the Φύσις in the world. It does not matter whether the written sign designating a man visually looks similar to a human figure or not. What matters is the preservation of the link between world and earth. This link allows a back-and-forth flow between them, and their strife. In all forms of language, the tension and dialogue between earth and world are what can preserve man from the dangers of the Τέχνη, which can lead him to sever all connection between his world and the Φύσις, and thus lead him to ground his language and his thoughts in the clouds. The strifes of Φύσις and Τέχνη, earth and world, are meant

⁹¹ The relative simplicity of alphabetic systems could be seen as one of main factors leading to their appearance and success. It constitutes a trade-off between mnemonic and meta-physical complexity: less memory and learning are required to master the system, but it requires that its users share a set of common meta-linguistic concepts, a meta-physical conception of the nature of language, like the separation of words into phonemes. The benefits of such a phonetic writing would seem obvious to any of its user, but this efficiency comes with a price, which has often been overlooked: it induces limitations on the house of being where it is used.

⁹² It should nonetheless be noted that standardized ideographic writing system like the Chinese Han.zi also have creation rules: one cannot draw an arbitrary drawing and make it a character. It first has to respect the constraints associated with the usual writing medium. For example, it must be easily drawn with a brush, and be monochromatic. This is why Chinese characters are usually decomposable as a set of short straight strokes drawn in particular directions.

to occupy the central place in man's life, and they represent a key to the experience of his essential being. It is through these strifes that man can accomplish his destiny, and be more than a mere talking creature. Without them, man does not occupy his rightful place in the universe, and he loses sight of the Φύσις, preferring the clouded world that gives him an illusion of all-mightiness.

This nonetheless does not imply that ideographic writing systems are necessarily preferable to phonetic ones. An alphabetic writing, by its inherently more technical nature, can help man gain a more precise vision of certain aspects of the Φύσις, an example of which is the aforementioned distinction between the physical voice and the consonants, which are the product of the Τέχνη. Such a distinction, which accurately reflects in the world a characteristic of the earth, would not be possible with a purely ideographic script. In the West, phonetic writing has often been considered superior to ideograms, especially after the so-called *renaissance*, which marks the beginning of the rise of modern technical societies. Rousseau clearly supported such a view, as he declared that "the painting of objects fits savage peoples; signs of words and sentences to barbarian peoples; and the alphabet to the civilized peoples"⁹³ in his *Essay on the origin of languages*. Derrida, on the other hand, praised the ideograms, perceived as less "meta-physical" and which he saw as a possible antidote to the "poison" affecting Western thought.

Ideograms are nonetheless not a panacea, and modern societies using ideographic writing can be affected by the supremacy of the Τέχνη in the same way as the ones using alphabetic systems. Both types of writing become equivalent if they are only "used," as ready-to-hand tools, rather than as instruments of a continuous *poiesis*. Reading a newspaper in consonantal Hebrew or ideographic Chinese, a man does not normally think of the grounding of the written signs. It does not matter that the first type of system is grounded in the world, whereas the second possesses a more direct link to the earth, because in both cases, the glyphs are by most people only perceived as logograms, images designating con-

⁹³ TBA. Original French: "La peinture des objets convient aux peuples sauvages; les signes des mots et des propositions aux peuples barbares; et l'alphabet aux peuples policés." Quoted in: Derrida, Jacques. *De la grammatologie*. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967: 11. Print. (*Essai sur l'origine des langues*)

cepts or “things,” whose visual appearance are irrelevant to their meaning. The benefits and dangers of both systems are canceled by readiness-to-hand. The strife of earth and world is stalled, and man forgets his essential being. How can the strife be preserved and even nurtured then? The key is not in the type of writing system in itself, but rather in the *poiesis* of the written sign.

The work of time inevitably induces a readiness-to-hand, and a weakening of the link between the signs and their ground. To counteract this, man must therefore continuously bring back his world to the earth, and once again experience the act of creation of a sign, that is, its *poiesis*. This means questioning the tradition, renewing it constantly, trying to push its limits, and re-experiencing its genesis. This process would generate another strife, of course: the tension between the necessity of a permanent state of re-creation of language and the need for a constancy that is necessary in order to maintain a reasonable degree of intelligibility across time and space. For now, however, the men of the narrative are only the custodians of a writing system whose *poiesis* has been lost in time. They are mere users of writing, rather than poets. This is not directly tied to the phonetic nature of the system, but rather to an obliviousness to the *poiesis* itself. At this point, the Hebrews are not yet lost in the clouds of the Τέχνη, but this danger is clear and present, as they have yet to perceive the full potential of the written word, which can lift them up but also bring them down.

4.2.6 Emergence of the narrative within itself, as (hi)story and law

Writing does not emerge as a purely meta-physical concept, but rather through actual instances in which written words are carved upon the earth. In the narrative, writing first appears as a medium for the redaction of a (hi)story, and soon after for the recording of the divine law. Both appearances occupy a very peculiar place in the universe of the narrative. Among the first instances of writing, we indeed find the narrative itself, as both (hi)story and Law. The first five books of the Old Testament, the Torah, include the (hi)story of their writing process: the narrative is said to be written at Mount Sinai, with the Deity as its inspirator and Moses as its

scriptor. This demonstrates the intricacy of the link between the narrative and the question of the nature of man's essential being. The narrative is meant to be a lighthouse guiding the men of the narrative on the path of thinking; a (hi)story presenting the history of the universe and the divine law. (Hi)story and law both could exist before in oral form, to a certain extent, but the advent of the narrative, as a concrete and permanent monument given to mankind, radically changes the impact that both have in the life of men.

Before, knowledge of the laws given to guide men on their path was short-lived, as they irremediably ignored these laws, thereby preventing their descendants from receiving the divine guidance as an inheritance. Now, however, the preservation of only one physical manuscript is sufficient to allow future generations to have a chance to benefit from both the guidance of the Law and the lessons of (hi)story. This guidance is now also present as a physical, earthly "thing," which can be seen and touched, and whose invariance can be witnessed at all times, by all peoples. All of this is made possible by the new dimension of language offered by literacy, which shows how the evolution and development of language induce a profound transformation of man's existence. Language, through the Torah that now represents its most prominent manifestation, its medium, continues to guide the men of the narrative. In the Scriptures as a whole, no other writing will ever be as important as these books written in Sinai. The beginning of the written word will also be its peak, the uttermost demonstration of the power of the written signs, and of their effect on man's world. The main opportunity offered by literacy to man, however, has yet to be revealed.

4.2.7 Unconcealment: being in time

חַסֵּד מִפְּנֵי קֶדֶם
 מִפְּנֵי קֶדֶם
 חַסֵּד מִפְּנֵי קֶדֶם
 חַסֵּד מִפְּנֵי קֶדֶם

Nature is before thy hand,
 Scripture before thine eyes,
 and nature is hard for us,
 Scripture is easy for us.

— St Ephrem, *Hymns on Faith*⁹⁴

These verses of the Syriac poet remind us that the Scriptures are not an end in themselves: they are merely a guide helping us better perceive the nature of the Φύσις in which we are thrown. Hermeneuts often focused so much on writings that they lost sight of the Φύσις it depicts, as nature appears so obvious that man often fails to see its essence, whereas glyphs always appear somewhat mysterious. Literacy itself is meant to affect man's vision of nature, and not only represent a meta-physical realm. As seen in the previous pages, the advent of the written word induces a series of transformations of man's world, many of which are very conspicuous.

One of the most profound effects of literacy on man's world has nonetheless often been overlooked: the effect it can have on man's relationship with time, which is a fundamental dimension of the Φύσις. A previous section (§ 4.2.5) has shown how the transition from orality to literacy constitutes a transition from a language deployed in time to one deployed in space. This transition is not a mere change of medium, but rather is part of the ek-static movement where language is used as a vehicle leading man toward the appropriation of his essential being. Through the encounter with the unintelligible at Babel, man was given a limited vision of the presence-at-hand of language. This presence-at-hand mainly concerned the unintelligible linguistic content, revealing the essence and non-essence of language, but not the presence-at-hand of his own speech. With an exclusively oral language, man can only try to perceive the presence-to-hand of his language as an abstract form, as a mental re-telling, a re-enactment of the act of speech. Oral speech authorizes man to recall past speech or prophecies. The temporal nature of such speech, its *presence*, nonetheless implies that its presence-at-hand would always slip away, that it would always be as evanescent as the oral word itself.

Literacy opens up the possibility of a liberation from the

⁹⁴ Translation from: Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847: 323. Print; Original Syriac from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1961: 201. Print.

evanescence and presence of orality. Language can now be deployed in space, on the earth, and it can overcome this evanescence. The written word can now remain fully present-at-hand, carved on a material right in front of man's eyes. Past speeches can be reflected upon, visible in their entirety, unchanging and unaffected by the men who transmit them across time and space. The houses of being do not only represent the world of the living: the remnants of the work of the dead are now also preserved intact within their walls. No support is thus necessary in order for them to be passed on to future generations, and they are far less prone to natural decay and human modifications than ever before.

Literacy thus induces the first breaking of language's presence. Man can now directly access the speech of the past, by bringing it back to presence, by reading, by resurrecting the inscribed consonants with his voice. Before, man could of course already access the sayings of past men, but only indirectly, mediated through present men and their memory. Now, a direct line has been formed. Man can transcend the present, and enter into a direct relation with the world of past men, or prophecies foretelling the future in the case of a divine revelation. The requirement of immediate temporal and spatial proximity that prevailed during the oral age, without which man could not discover and dwell in new parts of his house of being, is no longer in effect. Man can now access new parts of the house through the mediation of the earthly support of the written word, which can be transmitted across time and space, without even being read and understood. Man thus gains a considerable freedom of movement within the house, and he can thereby considerably enlarge his worldly horizon. With writing, the non-present can be brought to man's presence. Man thus remains in his presence, but he has gained a broader temporal view; he can see the non-present as present.

Furthermore, the presence-at-hand of language also allows the birth of interpretation, as a process by which man attempts to uncover the meaning of an unclear speech. With oral speech, if something is not understood by the hearer, he can immediately request an explanation, as the speaker is present right in front of him. Renowned teachers like Socrates, Jesus, or the druids of ancient Gaul did not leave us any writing by their own hands, perhaps for this very reason, preferring the presence of oral speech and dialogue as a way to unconceal meaning. If some of their

teachings can now be accessed, it nevertheless is because they have been recorded in writing, something that not only allows their transmission, but also allows us to see these teachings as a whole, and not only as present, fleeting conversations. What is considered unclear can be reflected upon, using as much time as one needs. One can always come back to what has been written, and the reader is in control of the way he studies it. Language goes from time to space, the tongue becomes the pen, and dialogue becomes interpretation.

With his hands free from the burden of sustaining the house of being, man can finally step back and take a look at his dwelling. He can now perceive the presence-at-hand of the house, and the fact that this presence-at-hand gives him a certain vision of the non-present, which is brought to presence by the written word. Man can now not only directly access a “past” world, without the mediation of tradition, but also future ones as well, through revealed prophecies. His temporality is broadened: he has gained a more direct grasp of the non-present. He now has the means to see beyond his presence, more than he ever could before. The house of being now not only gathers the present universe through the power of semiosis, it also gathers the past and future of this universe. The house now gives man a means that he can use to gain a sight of the temporality of the universe, in both the physical and meta-physical realms. As a means of representation of the Φύσις, the house of being can now reveal its temporal nature better than ever before: not as a series of present moments, but as a continuous organic growth, from the beginning of creation until its completion. In the world, this means that man can peer beyond the presence of the village, and perceive it as the aforementioned world-tree, as an organism, product of the Τέχνη but enclosed within the Φύσις, which came to be with the building of the house of Adam, and which has grown, branched, and budded, sheltering man and offering him a space where he can work toward the fulfillment of his destiny.

Writing, however, not only changes man’s relationship with time. It also transforms his relationship with language as well, that is, with the house of being itself. Within an exclusively oral world, man could only see language in its readiness-to-hand. The Babel episode then opened the possibility for him to see the essence of language in general, but not yet the presence-at-hand of his own

intelligible speech, of the sign-blocks that he fashions and that become part of the house. The advent of writing finally offers him the possibility to perceive his (written) speech as present-at-hand, to perceive its nature, as it can be seen as an earthly “thing,” right in front of his eyes, and in the world. Literacy operates what seems like an externalization of language, which can now become a present-at-hand subject of study. Language can be thought of, and man can begin to reflect on the structure of the house of being: on both what the signs “mean” and on the nature of the signs themselves.

When man becomes literate, the vehicle that is language is thus taken to a new stat-ion, and man goes from an exclusively oral world to one that combines orality and literacy. As for the other aforementioned stat-ions, man will then be presented with a choice, and he will need to take a stand regarding his relationship with both the new and old environment. Literacy automatically brings on a partial liberation from the chains of presence, as it gives man a better sight of the temporality in which he is thrown. The written word, however, is the key to a deeper level of insight and a greater degree of freedom from presence, but these only come to those who are willing to embrace the gift of literacy for what it truly is: an *ek-stasis* from the presence induced by orality. Oral speech nonetheless is not something that man must be liberated from, as it is an essential element of the *ek-stasis*, and an element that does not come from the transition between stat-ions, but rather from the tension, the strife of the stat-ions themselves. This must be perceived by men when they take their stand toward the emerging environment, choosing either to bridge them or leap between them.

4.2.7.1 The bridging of presence and non-presence

In the narrative, the emergence of literacy is initiated at Sinai, but it goes on perpetually, as new generations of men always begin their lives in the exclusively oral paradigm. Children first learn to speak at least several years before they become literate, and some of them will never be offered this chance. The transition from orality to literacy thus is never a one-time event, but rather something through which a large part of humanity will go through, from the time of Sinai until the end of days. The emergence of literacy in-

duces an *ek-stasis*, throwing the literate man in a new linguistic paradigm, which not only affects language as a means of communication but also language as the house of being. Undergoing this transition from an exclusively oral environment to one combining orality and literacy, man is given an opportunity to reflect on his past facticity, and also an occasion to establish a link between his past and present environments.

Literacy has begun to break the spell of the *lethe* of the non-present. Man's presence is shaken by the gathering of the non-present in the presence of the house of being, something that can help him perceive the essence of his past *lethe*, and the limits of his current facticity. In order to do so, man must attempt to build a bridge between the two environments. To be literate do indeed partially break the spell of presence, but man may simply overlook the change and continue to ignore anything that lies beyond the horizon of the present. The bridge is the key to the success of the *ek-stasis*: what the emergence of literacy is meant to bring to man is a gift, but one that must be earned, by a conscious building. To go from a readiness-to-hand of language to its presence-at-hand is only a preliminary step. The ultimate goal is to extend man's temporal horizon, from a presence-at-hand of a house of being that gathers the non-present in the present, toward a vision of man's true temporality.

To build a bridge between environments is not merely to join them, but rather to put them in relation, in tension. The new environment includes both literacy and orality, and thus a fusion of the two environments would not be beneficial to man: it would simply constitute a larger environment. The productive tension that will become the source of the unconcealment associated with this *ek-stasis* does not occur between orality and literacy, but rather between the exclusively oral environment, one in which the *lethe* of the non-present is fully manifested, and the one combining the oral with the written, one in which the *lethe* of the non-present has begun to be broken. When appropriately observed, the presence in which the illiterate man is prisoner can be seen as the non-essence of time, the "un-time." This, however, first requires an explanation.

To be fully engulfed in presence is not only to have a deficient vision of time. It can rather be seen as not living in time at all.

Not living in **time**, man lives in the **un-time**. The prisoner of presence indeed possesses a mental representation of time, as a timeline on which he continuously moves. Within presence, the past has no “being.” It has ceased to be when it has left the present, while the future has yet to be and to take its place. To be a prisoner of presence is not to be completely ignorant of the non-present, but rather to see it as something outside of *being*; not to see it as part of the universe, but only as something that once *was*. To live in presence thus is not to be ignorant of the past or future, as men always have had memories of their past and oral traditions recording the past of other men or prophecies. To live in un-time is to be oblivious to the temporality of the universe, that is, to the fact that what *is* is not limited to what we perceive as present, to the fact that time forms an inseparable entirety, to paraphrase again S^t Thomas Aquinas.⁹⁵ Therefore, the exclusively oral environment in which the custodians are thrown before Sinai can be associated with the un-time. The emergence of literacy marks the appearance of non-present worlds: the non-present is not only seen through the physical ruins it left on the earth, that is, the object of archeology, but it is now also visible through writing, which provides a direct link between the past and present dimensions of the world, and allows man to peer at history through (hi)story.

Contrary to evanescent oral speech, whose canvas is the presence of time, written texts remain fixed in time because their canvas is space. The difference it brings is subtle, but its effects can be tremendous: with a written text, man has in front of him a part of the world, coming from the past, which *is*, and not merely *was*. We have seen that the *lethe* of presence makes man believe that *to be* equals *to be present*. The written text, however, offers him an occasion to reflect on this presence. A text is a part of the world that is present but also remains constant, unaffected by time, something that *is*, but is not bound by the boundaries of presence. The appearance of the written text thus gives man a sight of something that is *in time*, by opposition to what is seen

⁹⁵ “Praeterea, in aeternitate non est praesens, praeteritum vel futurum, cum sit tota simul, ut dictum est.” From: Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae: Volume 2, Existence and Nature of God: 1a. 2–11*. Cambridge University Press, 2006: 139. Print. (Summa 1a q10,2 4). English translation: “present, past and future do not exist in eternity, which, as we have said, is instantaneously whole.” From: Ibid.: 138.

by the man who is living in presence, that is, *in un-time*. This occurs both on the earth and in the world: man can be *in time* on the earth, seeing the temporality of the Φύσις, but he can also gain a similar view of the world, seeing the house and the village in their temporality, that is, as the world-tree, an organically growing structure parallel to the Φύσις, a meta-φύσις that forms a whole in time as well as in the space where it grows.

As a rather “down to earth” example of the link uniting literacy and time, it can be noticed that no matter how long it has been since Aristotle wrote his *Metaphysics*, men will tend to quote its content using the present tense: “In his *Metaphysics*, the philosopher says ...,” rather than “the philosopher said ...,” but when referring to an oral speech, people more commonly use a past tense: “Jesus said to her, ‘Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again.’⁹⁶” This is only a hint of the nature of the written text, which can transcend presence. The emergence of literacy can be seen as the emergence of a counterpart to presence, the essence whose non-essence is un-time: time. The word, of course, is not to be taken in its everyday sense, but rather as a counterpart to presence, time as a continuous whole, an entirety, rather than as a series of evanescent present moments.

Given a first glimpse of the essence of time, the wise man will attempt to bridge it with its non-essence, which constitutes his current facticity: the un-time, presence. Such a man will reflect on the contrast between these two types of temporalities, and the role that each plays in man’s walk toward his essential being. This reflection is the aim of the *ek-stasis* of Sinai, which is not, as it may appear, a mere revelation of the non-present to man. In order to perceive the goal of this *ek-stasis*, one must first ask the following question: why does the Deity throw man into presence in the first place? Man could indeed have been thrown in time instead of un-time. For him, this would not have made a significant difference, as he would have been affected by a *lethe* similar to the one affecting the pre-literate man. He would have been blind to presence instead of being blind to the non-present. This shows the purpose of the *ek-stasis*: it reveals the fact that contrast is needed in order for something to be unconcealed, and that it is the building of the bridge that brings on an unconcealment, rather than the nature of

⁹⁶ Joh 4:13.

the new environment in which man is thrown.

Directly thrown in time, man would not be able to see what time is, and the same goes for the un-time. Presence is not merely something that man must escape so as to take refuge in a broader sense of temporality. Presence is a necessary stage⁹⁷ allowing both time and un-time to be unconcealed to man. Such an unconcealment occurs as the result of a tension between the two contrasting elements, like the two extremities of Heraclitus' lyre, whose tension makes possible the emission of a sound. In this case, what is produced is the unconcealment of man's temporal facticity, as a creature living in the presence of the phenomenon but one that can nonetheless perceive that what *is* is not limited to what it perceives as present. Man will not be able to leave the presence of the phenomenon, the presence of the earth and the skies. The house of being that he inhabits nonetheless now offers him the possibility of an awareness of the essence of time.

The *ek-stasis* initiated by the emergence of literacy thus aims at changing man's relationship with time, first by revealing him the limits of his original temporal horizon, showing him time, as non-present, and secondly by putting time and un-time in contrast. To clearly see the nature and purpose of this contrast is not an easy task. A starting point could be to consider the following quote of Heidegger, in which he discusses the relationship between being and time:

"Time," inceptually thought, designates the "temporal" in the sense of "time and untime," that is, in what presence can be manifested. The temporal lets the present manifest its presence in its time. Time designates the duration [*die Weile*⁹⁸] of what is then present. Time makes the duration perdure as what is

⁹⁷ The word "stage" here does not imply that presence must be overcome once and for all to leave place to a higher stage, as presence must remain a possibility in order for it to be overcome. The two stages are rather complementary.

⁹⁸ The German noun *die Weile*, and the verb *Weilen* which is associated to it, are very difficult to translate in English. The noun seems to designate the essence of a duration, not as something lasting for a certain amount of time, with a beginning and an end, but rather the fact that something is located within time, actively going through it. If we transpose the original German word in English, it would be "a while" or "a whiling."

then present. Time is the “en-whiling” of the presence of what is present. In “en-whiling” do beings manifest their being.⁹⁹

The *ek-stasis* from presence is the beginning of a new path. Man exits the boundaries of presence, that is, of un-time, and he now enters time. His temporal horizon is no longer a mere moving point on a time-line. He now can see and appropriate the line itself, and see its oneness. He goes from being-present to being-in-time, to “enwhiling” (*Erweilen*). Heidegger’s neologism emphasizes the vision of time as a *duration*, instead of a succession of time points. To be free from the *lethe* of presence thus moves man from un-time unto time. It gives him a clearer vision of the nature of time. The *ek-stasis* made possible by the emergence of the written word nonetheless goes further. It firstly represents an opportunity for man to perceive his temporality, through enwhiling. It is also, secondly, a way for man to appropriate it: not to attempt to go from un-time unto time, but rather to embrace the difference between them, and to dwell in the interstice between them. This difference is precisely the means given to man so that he could appropriate time, following the saying of Heraclitus: “. . . whatever is by itself at variance is nevertheless in agreement with itself; counter-striving harmony it is, as with the bow and the lyre.”¹⁰⁰ The counter-striving harmony, the resonance produced by the tension between time and un-time, is the appropriation of man’s temporality. It is now, for the bridge-builder, not a transition from presence to a larger vision, but rather a stereoscopic vision: he can at will see the universe from the point of view of presence, or from a point

⁹⁹ TBA. Original German: “Die »Zeit«, anfänglicher gedacht, zeitigt das »Zeitige« im Sinne der »Zeit und Unzeit«, zu der, d. h. in die das Anwesende an west. Das Zeitige läßt Anwesendes je zu seiner Zeit an wesen. Die Zeit zeitigt die Weile des jeweilig Anwesenden. Die Zeit erweilt die Weile des Anwesenden als des Jeweiligen. Die Zeit ist das Erweilnis des Anwesens des Anwesenden. Im Erweilnis west das Sein des Seienden.” From: GA 78: 198; This passage is extremely difficult to translate accurately, as it makes an extensive use of specificities of the German language. Attention should thus be paid to the original text in order to fully grasp its meaning.

¹⁰⁰ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin’s Hymns “Germania” and “The Rhine.”* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014: 111. Print; Original German: “Nicht verstehen sie [nämlich die alltäglich so in ihrem Dasein Dahintreibenden], daß und wie jenes, was für sich auseinandersteht, doch in sich übereinkommt; gegenstrebigter Einklang ist das, wie beim Bogen und der Leier.” From: GA 39: 124.

of view in *ek-stasis* from the present.

It is through the complementarity of time and un-time that man can truly see his place in time: not with a “God’s eye” view outside of time, nor one limited by a narrow presence. He sees it as humans can experience it, that is, as a strife between the presence of their phenomenon and the eternal nature of the Φύσις. As Heraclitus says: “(the) One holds itself together by way of counter-striving.”¹⁰¹ The strife of time and un-time gives man a chance to appropriate his temporality. It also constitutes a temporal reflection, showing him the progress he has made on the path.

The contrast between time and un-time can mark an appropriation of the temporality of human life, which is bounded by a precise horizon: birth and death. Through the world opened by the house of being, including the written word, man can transcend his phenomenological horizon and envision the temporality of the universe, which is also bounded by a beginning and an end. The narrative itself reflects it. Its first word proclaims the beginning of time: בְּרֵאשִׁית, “In the beginning,”¹⁰² and it ends with a very peculiar word, indicating both the notion of closure and confirmation: ἀμήν (אָמֵן), “Amen.”¹⁰³ The horizon of the (written) text of the Bible parallels the narrative, its universe, and the life of man. With the gift of writing, man can envision his place in time. With the gift of the Torah, as law and (hi)story, he can envision his place in history. The horizon of his life, that is, birth and death, can be put in relation with the horizon of the universe, its creation and telos.

The *ek-stasis* initiated by literacy induces a clearing giving man sight of time, as non-presence, and it also sets up the strife of time and un-time. This strife helps man in his appropriation of the space opened by the clearing, his appropriation of time, but it also ripples and induces other (sub)strifes: a strife of man’s presence and the horizon of his life; a strife of his presence and the horizon of history; a strife of man’s individuality and his being part of a humanity, his life versus history. As Heidegger argued in *Being*

¹⁰¹ Heidegger, Martin, and Richard Rojcewicz. *Basic Concepts of Ancient Philosophy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007: 183. Print. Original German: “«Die Menschen» verstehen nicht, wie das Eine auseinanderstrebend ineinandergeht.” From: GA 22: 232.

¹⁰² Gen 1:1.

¹⁰³ Rev 22:21.

and time, man's consciousness of his temporal horizon is decisive in order for him to be an "authentic" ontological being. It is by being-towards-death that he can truly see what life is.¹⁰⁴ In the same manner, the *ek-stasis* from presence also gives man an opportunity to become a truly historical being, by building a bridge linking the horizon of his life to the horizon of the universe, not only by "being-towards-the-telos" of the universe, but by seeing his own end, as both the completion and the destination of his being.

The meta-narrative of the Sinai episode thus offers us a remarkable view of the unconcealment of man's relationship with time. In it, the emergence of writing coincides with the emergence of the narrative within the narrative: the Torah is revealed to man, and with it comes the beginning of the revelation of man's place in history. The creation of the universe and the creation of man are depicted in it, and he can establish a link between his own life and the (hi)story given by the narrative. The revelation of the Bible, within its own narrative, unconceals the content of the space cleared by the emergence of writing. The Bible gives man sight of the (pre-existing) content of history, once time itself is uncovered by the emergence of literacy.

The revelation of the Bible, the revelation of man's place within the universe of the narrative, is nonetheless only at its beginning during the Sinai episode. Furthermore, at this point, only one of the 72 peoples of living on the earth is given knowledge of this revelation: the Hebrews in the narrative, the custodians in the meta-narrative. Most other nations are also given the gift of literacy, therefore also having the possibility to bridge time and un-time. Only the custodians, however, are at this point given a clear sight of their place within the larger history of the universe. The reason for this may once again be the establishment of a contrast. Indeed, in order to make the role and power of the revelation of the Law more visible, it must be contrasted with the absence of this revelation. Like for the Babel episode, in which the Hebrews were set apart as custodians of the Adamic house of being, the setting apart of those who are alone given the revelation at this point does not imply a preference or a higher status within the creation. The separation is necessary in order to establish a

¹⁰⁴ Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Reprint edition. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008: 296. Print.

contrast. This necessary separation will itself be dissolved later in the narrative, according to the same process: the separation will disappear in order to make us perceive the role it played in history.

The man who succeeds in bridging the two stations, thereby unconcealing his temporality and the place of his life within the (hi)story of the universe, will forever be changed by this experience. He is running on the path toward his destiny, getting closer to his essential being, and all this progress is initiated by the low-key emergence of writing. Nevertheless, none of it would have happened if man did not take a stand regarding the new environment into which he was thrown. The bridge-builder succeeds, but others will not make a wise choice, preferring the effortlessness of the leap.

4.2.7.2 The leap between presence and non-presence

Like the bridge-builder, the leaper also experiences the advent of literacy and the clearing of the non-present. The two types of men nonetheless have a very different relationship with their new environment. We have seen that the bridge-builder gains a clear sight of the contrast between time and un-time, which leads to the unconcealment of man's place in time. The leaper, on the other hand, fails to uncover his temporality. He does not take the steps necessary in order for him to see the purpose of the *ek-stasis* from his previous environment.

One of the causes of the leaper's misstep is the failure to see beyond the presence of the written word. This mistake is twofold: on the one hand, he considers the written text in front of him as present, oblivious to the fact that it transcends it, that is, that the text is in-time and not only present, and that it is so both on the earth and in the world. It is seen as a ready-to-hand object, a memory-aid that is only a deficient trace of a past presence. The written word is seen as a pale imitation of oral speech, perceived as the most authentic form of language.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, the leaper considers that the author of the text is absent, in the sense of someone who *is* not, who only *was*, and now is no more. The author is indeed absent, but in a different sense: the leaper's

¹⁰⁵ Saussure's quote in § 5.1: "Language [Langue] and writing are two distinct sign-systems; the sole purpose of the latter is to represent the former."

failure to see beyond his own presence blinds him to the nature of time, which is an entirety, and it blinds him to the nature of being as well, which is being-in-time and not just being-present. The author is absent, but it does not mean that he *is* not. The leaper's presence, his being in un-time, not contrasted with time, not only renders him oblivious to his place in time but also skews his vision of the universe as a whole: texts, the house of being, his own life, all remain blurred by the leaper's refusal to peer beyond the limits of his own presence.

From a readiness-to-hand of the present, man then jumps into another: the readiness-to-hand of both present and non-present, which are both merged together through the emergence of literacy, on the earth and in the world. The written word brings the non-present to presence, but man fails to perceive its temporal nature, and he sees everything through the lens of his own presence. In particular, written texts are considered to be mere ready-to-hand linguistic tools that facilitate man's use of language, instead of being seen as operating a clearing, opening up the temporality of the house of being. Even with this deficient vision of time, the house of the leaper can nonetheless still integrate elements from past worlds through written texts. He can access the "reserve" (*Bestand*), but he will continue to fail to see the temporality of the house, which is part of the entirety of time and not merely of the present. He may be able to see that he is a dweller of the village, but he will not perceive that the village is itself forming something more, the world-tree, which continuously grows, sheltering all mankind.

Even for the leaper, literacy nevertheless represents a great gift, one that considerably enlarges his house of being and the horizon that the house gives him of the universe. Indeed, even though he will not perceive the true temporality of both the Φύσις and the meta-φύσις, he will nonetheless see the remains left by his forefathers in the world, although only in their presence. The failure of the leaper to set up the strife of time and un-time should nonetheless not lead us to think that the *ek-stasis* was all in vain for him. In the narrative, the gift of literacy comes together with the gift of the Torah, the gift of (hi)story and the Law, which offers man the opportunity to come back on the right path: through the examination of the narrative itself, man will be able to find where he strayed, and as long as he lives, it will never be too late to undertake the building of the bridge.

Chapter 5

The Babylon episode

Centuries after the wandering in the Sinai desert and the emergence of the written word, the narrative is still focused on the destiny of the dwellers of the house of Adam: the Hebrews. Most of the others houses nonetheless have also seen the emergence of the new medium. All have been given an opportunity to transcend their presence and to see the organic nature of the village, that is, to see it as the world-tree. Few will effectively be consciously living in-time rather than in the un-time, in presence, but this nonetheless does not stop man's course on the path toward his destiny. The world-tree continued to grow under the influence of the Φύσις, and through the Τέχνη used by man to trim it, as a conscientious gardener. Its branches have grown in length as well as in strength, and the houses of the village are now larger, having been considerably extended following the change of their inner dynamics induced by the emergence of literacy.

The dwellers also now enjoy a greater freedom of movement within their house, as they no longer need the help of someone close to them in order to discover new parts of the world: physical and temporal presence can be replaced by the presence of the written medium. The houses are now also significantly strengthened, as the written word acts as a cement that makes them stand, without the need for constant human support, preventing their collapse and their fall into oblivion. One thing has nonetheless not been changed by the advent of literacy: the branches of the world-tree are still far away from each other, never entering into contact.

The various houses of the village are isolated from one another, and men are living a life of seclusion within their home.

In the earthly narrative, the Hebrews have now taken possession of the Promised Land, but because of their disregard for the divine law, they will soon be taken as captives to Babylon. This event will mark the beginning of an exile, not only on the earth (the so-called “Babylonian captivity”) but also in the world as well. The dwellers of the house of Adam will indeed be taken away from the house of being that had been their sole dwelling until then, and now is their home. They will be forced to learn the language of Babylon, and thus dwell in another house of being. This worldly event will constitute the heart of the fourth *ek-stasis*, the fourth station where the vehicle will be taken, so as to offer man a new opportunity to fulfill his destiny. Perhaps more important than the exile itself, the return from this journey to the foreign will be what offers man a chance to unconceal a new part of his facticity, and thereby a chance to develop his relationship with his essential being. As the returning prodigal son, the man who comes home from the foreign will finally see its precious nature, and what a home really is.

With the fourth *ek-stasis*, the branches of the world-tree will remain distant and distinct from one another. Man, however, will become able to leap and to throw lines between them, putting them in tension and thereby opening the possibility of an unconcealment of their nature. The homecoming from the foreign and the tension between houses will allow some men, those willing and capable of seeking their essential being, to see a new part of their facticity: the peculiarity of their home, and what differentiates it from the other house that they visited during their travel to the foreign.

5.1 The narrative of the Babylon episode

Following the event of the tower of Babel, the biblical world now contains a multitude of languages, spoken by various peoples scattered across the earth. Surprisingly, not a single one of these languages is mentioned before the reign of Hezekiah, King of Judah in 701 B.C. The Israelites nonetheless necessarily had numerous encounters with foreign languages and cultures before this date,

notably in Egypt. In particular, it can reasonably be inferred that Moses would have been fluent in Egyptian,¹ which perhaps even would even have been his mother tongue, but no foreign language is ever explicitly mentioned in the “Law of Moses.” A parallel with writing can be made: writing existed before Moses but it was never mentioned before God’s command to write down the story of the attack of the Amalekites. In the previous chapter, this fact was interpreted as a sign of the fact that writing begins to exist in its true sense only after this divinely determined appearance in the narrative. Likewise, the complete absence of mentions of foreign languages in the biblical narrative before Hezekiah does seem to make their first appearance particularly significant.

Even though specific languages are not mentioned in the Pentateuch, it nevertheless contains a prophecy announcing a future encounter with them:

Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he will put a yoke of iron upon your neck, until he has destroyed you. The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, *a nation whose language you do not understand*. (Deu 28:47–49, emphasis added²)

Before this time, the Israelites encountered foreign languages, and probably even learned some of them. The first one explicitly mentioned nonetheless is also the first one that will profoundly affect them as a people, not only changing their daily lives but also their relationship with the Deity as well.

The first encounter with this foreign language is done in two major stages: the first mention of the language itself, by name, and

¹ Historically, the language spoken in Ancient Egypt was an Afro-Asiatic language, very distantly related to Hebrew.

² תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשׂוֹב לֵב מִרֵּב כָּל־יְעַבְדְּתָּ׃ אֶת־אֹיְבֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלַחֲנֵנוּ יְהוָה בְּךָ בְּרָעָב וּבְצָמָא וּבְעִירֹם וּבְחֶסֶר כָּל־וְנָתַן עָלַי בְּרִזָּל עַל־צָנְאָרְךָ עַד הַשְׁמִידוּ אֹתְךָ׃ יִשָּׂא יְהוָה עָלֶיךָ גּוֹי מִרְחוֹק מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ כָּאֲשֶׁר יֵדְאָה׃ הַנָּשָׂר גּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִשְׁמַע לְשׁוֹנוֹ׃ (Deu 28:47–49).

the first appearance of a text in this language in the Scriptures. The first event is recounted in two different books, the second books of Kings and the book of Isaiah.³ In order to make this passage understandable, its context will first be briefly examined. We are now at the end of the 8th century B.C. The population of the northern Kingdom of Israel was deported by the king of Assyria in 720 B.C., and in 701 B.C. Jerusalem is threatened to receive the same fate. The Assyrian king Sennacherib has already conquered most fortified cities of the Kingdom of Judah, and he now intends to lay siege to the Holy City. The king of Judah, Hezekiah, stripped the temple of all its silver and took the gold overlaid on the temple's door in order to give it as tribute to Sennacherib.

The Assyrian king then sends three envoys to Jerusalem, who are known only by their Assyrian title: the Tartan (תַּרְתָּן), the Rabсарis (רַב־סָרִיס), and the Rabshakeh (רַב־שָׁקֶה). Once they arrive near the walls of the city, they ask to speak to the king. The king does not come in person, but rather sends three representatives: "Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder" (2 Ki 18:18⁴). The Rabshakeh then addresses a message from the king of Assyria, mocking Judea's reliance on God and the Egyptian Pharaoh to deliver them. He also mocks their reliance on Egypt concerning horses, which shows the Israelites' willingness to bypass the Mosaic Law: they bought horses from Egypt as the Law forbade them to breed such animals.⁵ The Rabshakeh then affirms that YHWH himself commanded him to attack the people of Judah, prompting an interruption by the three Hebrew representatives:

Moreover, is it without the LORD⁶ that I have come up against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it."Then

³ N.b.: the content of both accounts is nearly identical.

⁴ וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּצֵא אֲלֵהֶם אֱלִיָּקִים בֶּן־חִלְקִיָּהוּ אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַבַּיִת וְשִׁבְנָה וַיִּסְפֹּר וַיּוֹאֲחַ בֶּן־אַסָּף הַמְּזַכֵּר: (2Ki 18:18).

⁵ Deu 17:16. The Law also explicitly mentions a prohibition to go back to Egypt to acquire horses, but horse merchants could probably sell them directly in Israel.

⁶ In the Hebrew text, the Tetragrammaton (YHWH) is present where the translation indicates the capitalized "LORD." In this passage, "Lord" explicitly designates the God of the Hebrews, YHWH, and not one of Assyrian deities or a generic "Lord."

Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebnah, and Joah, said to the Rabshakeh, “*Pray, speak to your servants in the Aramaic language, for we understand it; do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall.*” But the Rabshakeh said to them, “Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and to drink their own urine? (2 Ki 18:25–27⁷, emphasis added)

According to the Italian scholar Menochius, the request to change languages would have been done “to prevent them from shewing their indignation by shooting at him, or out of fear, lest they should be induced to cause some sedition.”⁸ It would nonetheless seem more logical that it was done so that the people would not be distraught by the Assyrian’s message, and especially his claim that the “one true God” himself would have commanded the Assyrians to take the kingdom.

This dialogue also gives us a few information concerning language: the high-ranking officials were familiar with Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the whole region at the time, but the common people were not. Despite being linguistically very close, it is also implied that the two languages were not mutually intelligible.⁹ For the purpose of the present study, however, the important question

⁷ עָתָה הַמַּבְלָעָדִי יִהְיֶה עָלֵי עַלְמֵי מַלְכָּא הַמַּלְכָּא הַזֶּה לְהַשְׁמִיעָם יִהְיֶה אָמַר אֵלֵי עַלְמֵי מַלְכָּא הַזֶּה הָאָדָם הַזֶּה יִהְיֶה עָלֵי עַלְמֵי מַלְכָּא הַזֶּה וְהַשְׁמִיעָם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלְיָקִים בֶּן־חִלְקִיָּהוּ וְשִׁבְנָה וַיֹּאחֲזוּ אֶל־רַב־שָׁקָה דְּבַר־נָא אֶל־עַבְדֶּיךָ אַרְמִית כִּי שְׁמַעִים אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֶל־תְּדַבֵּר עִמָּנוּ יְהוּדִית בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַחֻמָּה: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלְיָהֻם רַב־שָׁקָה הֵעַל אֶדְנִיךָ וְאֶלְיָךְ שְׁלַחְנִי אֶדְנִי לְדַבֵּר אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הֲלָא עַל־הָאֲנָשִׁים הַיֹּשְׁבִים עַל־הַחֻמָּה לֵאמֹר לְאָכְלָא אֶת־ (2Ki 18:25–27).

⁸ Quoted from: Haydock, George Leo. *The Holy Bible; Translated from the Latin Vulgate: Diligently Compared with the Hebrew, Greek, and Other Editions in Divers Languages*. Edward Dunigan and brother, 1855: 485. Print.

⁹ Linguistically speaking, the two languages are relatively close. They share an almost identical phonology, morphology, syntax, and a large portion of their vocabulary. Even though the two languages are not mutually intelligible orally, many words and even sentences could be read and understood by people knowing one of the two languages, if they were written in a common script. The difference between the two could be compared to the difference between French and Italian, for example.

here is: why does the first mention of foreign languages occur at this precise moment?

The Hebrew officials attempted to use Aramaic as a way to conceal God's judgment upon Judah. When the Rabshakeh mocked them and their faith, they stayed silent, but when the envoy mentioned being there on the command of God, they interrupted him. Even though king Hezekiah was righteous, the divine judgment could have been caused by the offense of the previous kings, or the idolatry practiced by the people. The book of Isaiah attests that the Assyrians were indeed sent by God as a punishment: "Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger, the staff of my fury! Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets." (Isa 10:5–6¹⁰). The Assyrians would later also themselves be punished for their arrogance toward God, as announced by Isaiah,¹¹ but this fact nonetheless does not diminish the officials' fault. They used a foreign language that only they understood, as a way to hide God's judgment, perhaps fearing that they would be blamed by the people, or that the people would voluntarily submit to Assyria.

A possible explanation of the significance of this event, ushering the rise of a plurality of languages among the Hebrews, could therefore be that it prefigures the way God will use this language, that is, in an opposite way. The officials wanted to use it to conceal, God will use it to reveal. This event also marks the rise of the Gentiles among those who receive the favors of God, Gentiles who until then were almost always either considered as enemies or simply ignored. Here, God revealed himself to a Gentile king in order to destroy the last Israelite kingdom. The king sends an envoy to them to command them to submit to Assyria, according to the will of their own God, through a message spoken in their own language, but they instead request that the envoy speak the Gentiles' language. This is what would seem to make this passage particularly symbolic, and a prefiguration of the future role that the Aramaic language and Gentiles would play in Israel's future, as it will be seen.

¹⁰ הוֹי אֲשׁוּר שֶׁבֶט אָפִי וּמִסֵּדָהּ הוּא בְיָדָם וְעַמִּי: בְּנוֹי חֲנָף אֲשֶׁלְחָנוּ וְעַל־עַם עֲבָרְתִּי: "אֲצַנְנוּ לְשַׁלַּל שְׁלָל וְלָבֹז בָּז [וְלִשְׁמֹן] מֶרְמֶס כַּחֲמֹר חוּצוֹת: (Isa 10:5–7).

¹¹ Isa 10:24–25.

Following Sennacherib's arrogance and Hezekiah's prayers, the Assyrian army is decimated by an angel of the Lord and Jerusalem is momentarily spared. After showing the treasures of his kingdom to the Babylonian envoys, at that time an ally of Israel against Assyria, the prophet Isaiah announces to the king that all these treasures, and his own people, should be deported to Babylon, but not during his reign, to which he replies: "The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good.' For he thought, 'Why not, if there will be peace and security in my days?'" (2 Ki 20:19¹²).

Decades of peace follow, a period that was marked by the return of idolatry in Jerusalem and Judah. God's judgment would thus finally come, as promised, that is, through the hands of a people he already used to punish the Assyrians: the Babylonians. The creator nonetheless always offers an opportunity to repent before carrying out a sentence. He thus sent the prophet Jeremiah who in 627 B.C. would start preaching surrender to Babylon in Jerusalem. It is during one of his prophecies that the first sentence in the Aramaic language appears in the biblical text:

Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says the LORD: "Learn not the way of the nations, nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens because the nations are dismayed at them, for the customs of the peoples are false. . . . *Thus shall you say to them: "The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens."* (Jer 10:1–11, emphasis added¹³)

¹² נִיאֲמַר חִזְקִיָּהוּ אֶל־יְשַׁעְיָהוּ טוֹב דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּרְתָּ נִיאֲמַר הֲלוֹא אִם־שָׁלוֹם: "וְאָמַת יְהוָה בִּימִי: (2Ki 20:19).

¹³ שָׁמְעוּ אֶת־הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל: כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־דָרֶךְ: הַגּוֹיִם אֶל־תִּלְמְדוּ וּמֵאֲתוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־תִּחְתּוּ כִּי־תַחְתּוּ הַגּוֹיִם מִהֶמָּה: כִּי־תִחְקוּ הָעַמִּים הַכֵּל הוּא כִּי־עֵץ מִזֶּעַר כָּתְרוֹ מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵי־חָרָשׁ בַּמַּעֲצָד: בְּכֶסֶף וּבְזָהָב יִיבָהוּ בַּמִּסְמְרוֹת וּבַמִּקְבּוֹת יִחְזְקוּם וְלֹא יִפִּי: כֹּתֶמֶר מִקְשָׁה תִּמָּה וְלֹא יִדְּבֵרוּ נִשְׁוֹא כִּי לֹא יִצְעֲדוּ אֶל־תִּירָאוּ מֶהֶם כִּי־לֹא יֵרָעוּ וְגַם־הֵיטִיב אֵין אוֹתָם: ס מֵאֵין כְּמוֹד יְהוָה גְּדוֹל אֲתָה וְגְדוֹל שָׁמֹךְ בְּגִבּוֹרָה: מִי לֹא יִרְאֶה מִלֶּךְ הַגּוֹיִם כִּי לֶךְ יֵאָתָה כִּי בְּכָל־חֻקֵּי הַגּוֹיִם וּבְכָל־מַלְכוּתָם מֵאֵין כְּמוֹד: וּבְאַחַת יִבְעֲרוּ וְיִכְסְלוּ מִסֵּר הַכְּבָלִים עַץ הוּא: כֶּסֶף מְרַקַּע מִתְרַשֵּׁשׁ יוֹבֵא וְזָהָב מַאֲפֹז מַעֲשֵׂה חָרָשׁ וְיָדֵי צוֹרֵף תִּכְלֹת וְאֶרְנָן לְבוּשֶׁם מַעֲשֵׂה חֻקִּים כָּלָם: וַיְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אָמַת הוּא־אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים וּמִלֶּךְ עוֹלָם מִקְצֹפֹת תִּרְעַשׁ הָאָרֶץ וְלֹא־יִכְלּוּ גוֹיִם וְעַמּוֹ: ס כִּדְנָה תֵּאֲמָרוּן לַהֵם אֱלֹהֵי־אֱדֻמִּי וְאֶרְקָא לֹא עָבְדוּ: יֵאָבְדוּ מֵאַרְעָא וּמִן־תַּחֲתוֹ שְׁמָאֵא אֱלֹהֵ: ס "כִּדְנָה תֵּאֲמָרוּן

This is of course not perceivable in translation, or only through an explanatory footnote, but the italicized sentence is written in Aramaic, while the rest of the book is in Hebrew. Following the biblical chronology,¹⁴ this verse contains the first appearance of what would become the second language of the Bible. This sudden code-switching has prompted many commentators to affirm that this verse may be a later addition,¹⁵ but the prophetic nature of the text makes these hypotheses unnecessary. Indeed, as noted by George Leo Haydock,¹⁶ this verse is given to the Jerusalemites as a way to defend themselves, knowing these people would soon be in Babylon, surrounded by pagans who would mock their rejection of idols.

It is known from the narrative that 74 years before this prophecy, the common people did not understand Aramaic, and furthermore, the beginning of the book of Daniel implies that even the Hebrew nobility, those who were taken captive to Babylon, had to learn the local language after their arrival.¹⁷ From this, it can be inferred that this Aramaic verse, in which even the words “thus shall you say to them” are in the language of the invaders, has a double dimension. For the Jerusalemites, the immediate audience ignorant of this language, this unintelligible series of sounds may not be meant to be directly understood, but may only be a signal, showing them that they would soon have to face a strange language, which they will have to learn and that will transform the way they view their mother tongue.¹⁸ The secondary audience, to which the verse is directly addressed, is composed of the future captives in Babylon. They will live among the Babylonians, speak their language, but they will also need to defend their faith. Jeremiah gives

דִּי-שְׁמִיָּא וְאַרְקָא לָא עֲבָדִי לְהוֹם אֱלֹהֵיָּא (Jer 10:1-12) The Aramaic verse is: דִּי-שְׁמִיָּא וְאַרְקָא לָא עֲבָדִי לְהוֹם אֱלֹהֵיָּא (Jer 10:11).

¹⁴ Nb: The chronological order is significantly different compared to the order of the biblical canon.

¹⁵ Haydock, George Leo. “Haydock’s Catholic Bible Commentary, 1859 edition.” *Tripod*. Web. 28 Mar. 2013 (Context: “This verse is in Chaldean, for the captives to use at Babylon, to defend themselves. It should be in a parenthesis, as it interrupts the discourse. Perhaps it was added during the captivity.”).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Dan 1.

¹⁸ A parallel can be found between this event of the narrative and the encounter with the unintelligible that is at the heart of the ek-stasis following the confusion of tongues, in the meta-narrative presented in the third chapter.

them a rallying cry: “the gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens.” The prophet knew that his scribe, Baruch, would write down all these words and that they would be read in Babylon, by people who would then understand both languages.

Twenty-two years after Jeremiah’s prophecy, the narrative of the book of Daniel recounts the beginning of the exile of the men of Judah. Its content is particularly significant for the (hi)story of language in the Bible, for two reasons: it first gives us information concerning the shift of mother tongue of the Hebrews, who will after the captivity predominantly remain composed of native Aramaic speakers. Secondly, a large portion of the book is itself in Aramaic, marking the true beginning of the Bible as a plurilingual scripture.

The narrative of Daniel thus begins: Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took captives among the nobility of Judah and brought them to his capital. He selected a group of young people who had both a fair appearance and intellectual skills so that they could serve the court and adapt themselves to life in the imperial capital. The first thing ordered by the king concerning the captives was that they should be taught “the letters¹⁹ and language of the Chaldeans” (Dan 1:4²⁰). Following Jeremiah’s prophecy, the Israelites thus begin to encounter the culture and language of their divinely appointed captors. They will learn their “letters” so well that the Hebrew script used from the time of the captivity up until now is derived from the Aramaic used in Babylon, as the script of the time of Moses was forgotten.

Among the captors, the book mentions four young men in particular: Daniel, Hananiah, Misha-el, and Azariah. Follow-

¹⁹ Translations differ concerning the word סֵפֶר , which usually means “book,” but was translated by the LXX, the Vulgate, and several modern translations, like the RSV-CE, as “letters” or “writing” (LXX: γράμματα Vulgate: *litteras*).

²⁰ Since the word “language” is singular, we would have to assume that this language is Aramaic since it is used in later parts of the book, but on a purely historical level, we can note that Akkadian could still have been in use, at least as a literary language. Indeed, the dedicatory inscription on the Ishtar Gate built by Nebuchadnezzar is in Akkadian, but it could be remarked that such inscriptions in Europe were often written in Latin until very recent times, more than a millennia after Latin was supplanted by vernaculars as the language of daily communication.

ing three years of preparatory instruction, the young men are given Babylonian names by the chief eunuch before their introduction to the court: “Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Misha-el he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego” (Dan 1:7²¹). It was seen in previous chapters that the changing of names has a particular significance in the Scriptures. Adam’s dominion over the animals came with the creation of their names. It could be presumed that the Babylonian king also used naming as a way to assert his dominion over the captives, but it could also have been done in order to facilitate their assimilation into the local culture. Whatever were the intentions of the Babylonians, the names they chose would turn out to be offensive to the pious men of Judah:

— Daniel meaning “God is my judge”²² becomes Belteshazzar, whose meaning is uncertain but apparently involved the protection of the Babylonian god Bel.²³ — Hananiah, “Yah has been gracious,” becomes Shadrach, whose etymology is unclear as well, but a link with the Babylonian moon-god Aku has been proposed: “command of Aku.”²⁴ — Misha-el “Who is what God is” or “who belongs to God,”²⁵ becomes Meshach, probably also related to the moon-god as well: “who is what Aku

²¹ וַיִּשֶׁם לָהֶם שֵׁר הַפָּרִיסִים שְׁמוֹת וַיִּשֶׂם לְדַנְיָאֵל בִּלְטַשְׁצָאֶר וּלְחַנְיָיָה שְׁדֵרָךְ וּלְמִישָׁאֵל מִשְׁכָּךְ וּלְעֶזְרִיָּה עֲבֵד נְנוּ: (Dan 1:7–8).

²² Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Reprint edition. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994. Bibleworks.

²³ Different etymologies have been proposed: “Bel is the keeper of secrets” (*The Five Great Monarches of the Ancient Eastern World*, Rawlinson, 1880), “Bel’s prince.” (*History of Christian Names*, Yonge, 1884), or “protect his life!” (Robinson, Edward. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Hendrickson Publishers, 1996. Print.). The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* considers this last one to be a folk-etymology. (Bromiley, Geoffrey W. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: A-D*. Wm. B. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995: 456. Print.). Bel is mentioned in Isa 46:1, Jer 50:2, and Jer 51:44.

²⁴ Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Reprint edition. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994. Bibleworks.

²⁵ Koehler, Ludwig et al. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1. Ed. Johann Jakob Stamm. Trans. M. E. J. Richardson. Revised ed. edition. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001. Bibleworks.

(the moon-god).²⁶ — Azariah “Yah has helped,” becomes Abednego (עֶבְדֵּי נְגוֹ), a corruption of Abednebo “servant of Nebo,” the Babylonian god of wisdom. The Hebrews, however, would have been reluctant to write the names of pagan gods, so they may have altered the name on purpose.

The names chosen by the chief eunuch thus all seem to be related to pagan deities, showing the people of Judah that the preservation of their faith would require an active resistance to the Babylonian ways. From now on, they will feel the need for the Aramaic rallying cry pronounced by Jeremiah: “the gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens.” The most important for them is nonetheless not to verbally confront their pagan captors, but rather to keep this verse inscribed in their heart so that they would not forget God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, the one who led them out of bondage in Egypt, and who will one day deliver them from captivity.

The four men then politely refused the king’s food, as it was not prepared in accordance with the Law of Moses, and then requested the permission to eat only vegetables, which was granted by the chief eunuch. The rejection of the idolatry of Babylon and of its practices contrary to the Law nonetheless did not mean that they should reject all that the city had to offer. Moses was instructed with the wisdom of Egypt, and he probably became literate thanks to them. Thus, as St Jerome tells us,²⁷ the four young men accepted the knowledge of Babylon, just as the Church would later welcome the knowledge of the Greek pagan philosophers. The virtue of these young men who suffer for the sins of their ancestors would be rewarded, and thus “God gave them learning and skill in all letters and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” (Dan 1:17²⁸). The king would also recognize their value, deeming them “ten times better than all the magicians

²⁶ Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Reprint edition. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994. Bibleworks.

²⁷ Quoted by Aquinas: Aquinas, Thomas. *The Summa Theologica*. N.p.: Hayes Barton Press, 1952: 3410. Print. (Question 167.1).

²⁸ “וְהַיְלָדִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲרַבְעָתָם נָתַן לָהֶם הָאֱלֹהִים מִדָּעָה וְהַשְׂכָּל בְּכָל-סֵפֶר וְחִכְמָה: וְדָנִיֵּאל הָבִין בְּכָל-חֲזוֹן וְחִלְמוֹת:” (Dan 1:17).

and enchanters that were in all his kingdom” (Dan 1:20²⁹).

Then, one day, the king is troubled by a dream, and he thus summons the wise men of his court in order to hear their interpretation. It is at this precise moment, when the “Chaldeans”³⁰ address the king to inquire about this troubling dream, that the text of the book of Daniel switches languages, abandoning Hebrew to use the *lingua franca* of the kingdom: Aramaic.³¹ There is no universally accepted interpretation concerning the motivation explaining the language switch in the following chapters of Daniel. Several hypotheses can nonetheless be examined. For example, since the dialogues and letters mentioned in these chapters were originally in Aramaic, a Hebrew translation could have been suspected of unfaithfulness. To this, it could be objected that dialogues translated in foreign languages certainly are present in the Law of Moses, the dialogues with the Pharaoh, for example, so why do this now? A possible reply to this objection would be that the Israelites of the post-captivity period still understood Aramaic, whereas they forgot the Egyptian language. Another hypothesis, which seems more convincing, is that these parts of the book were intended to be read by Gentiles as well as the Hebrews. The Aramaic section of the book covers all the historical parts following the first dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and one prophetic vision of Daniel. After this, the text switches back to Hebrew. The inclusion of one vision but not the others probably is the most convincing evidence supporting this hypothesis, but now, let us first examine

²⁹ וְכָל דְּבַר חֲכֵמַת בֵּינָה אֲשֶׁר-בִּקֵּשׁ מֵהֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּמְצְאוּ עֹשֶׁר יָדוֹת עַל כָּל-הַחֲרָטְמִים הָאֲשֵׁפִים אֲשֶׁר בְּכָל-מְלָכוֹתָיו: (Dan 1:20).

³⁰ The term “Chaldeans” would seem to designate specialists of the interpretation of dreams, apparently very similar to the Magi of the Persians.

³¹ It can be noted that the transition between languages is very smooth in the book. In the Masoretic Text, it is only indicated by the word “Aramaic” after the sentence “the Chaldeans said to the king” (Dan 2:4 “וַיִּדְבְּרוּ הַכַּשְׁדִּים” (לְמַלְךְ אֲרָמִית)). Some translations have interpreted this word as a purely meta-textual note, and thus removed it from the text to put it in a footnote, while others have considered it as part of the verse: “the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic” (ESV). Even in such translations, the reader could easily interpret this as only indicating that Aramaic was the language of the court, but not that the following chapters of the book itself would now be written in this language! This may explain why early Christian interpreters did not comment on this change of language, as some of them may not even have been aware of the fact that this book was written in two different idioms, as they only read the Greek or Latin translations of the narrative.

the reasons why the Aramaic chapters would be of interest to the Gentiles.

The section starts with God revealing a dream to the king, who is troubled by this vision, and thus seeks the help of his wise men to understand it. The king wants to make sure that his counselors truly have gifts for the interpretation of dreams, and so he orders them to tell him both the content of the dream and its interpretation, otherwise, they would be executed. Only Daniel, after receiving a vision, is able to complete the task, announcing future events and the advent of the eternal kingdom of God. Daniel is then greatly honored by the ruler. Follows the famous story of the furnace: refusing to bow down before a golden image set forth by the king, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are thrown into a fiery furnace but are unaffected by its heat, and a fourth man whose appearance was that of a “son of the gods” is seen with the pious young men. Following this miracle, and possible theophany, Nebuchadnezzar repents and praises God:

Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set at nought the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins; for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way. (Dan 3:28–29³²)

Contrary to the Egyptian Pharaoh, the king of Babylon thus accepts God’s signs and is humbled. The chapter that follows is unique in the Old Testament narrative, as it is a first-person account written by Nebuchadnezzar himself, a Gentile. This narrative, from the point of view of a Gentile, is obviously not addressed to the Hebrews, but rather to the Babylonians, as for them the au-

³² עָנָה נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר וְאָמַר בְּרִידָא אֱלֹהֵהוֹן דִּי-שְׂדֵרְךָ מִישְׁדָּא וְעַבְדָּא גִנּוּ דִי-שְׁלַח “מִלְאָכָה וְשִׁיב לְעַבְדּוּהִי דִי הִתְרַחֲצוּ עֲלוּהִי וּמַלְתָּ מִלְכָּא שְׁנִי וַיְהִיבוּ (נִשְׁמִיחוּן) דִּי לֹא-יִפְלְחוּן וְלֹא-יִסְגְּדוּן לְכָל-אֱלֹהָהּ לָהֶן לֹא־אֱלֹהֵהוֹן: וּמִנִּי שִׁים שְׁעִים דִּי כָל-עָם אָמַר וְלָשׁוֹן דִּי-יֹאמַר [שְׁלַח] (שְׁלוּ) עַל אֱלֹהֵהוֹן דִּי-שְׂדֵרְךָ מִישְׁדָּא וְעַבְדָּא גִנּוּא הָדָמִין יִתְעַבְדָּא וּבִיתָהּ נִגְלִי יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה כָל-קְבֵל דִּי לֹא אִיתִי אֱלֹהָ אַחֲרָן דִּי-יִכְלַל לְהַצִּילָהּ: כְּדִנָּה” (Dan 3:28–29).

thority of the king would make the writing more trustworthy than a letter from any foreign prophet. The beginning of his declaration is by the way very clear: “King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages,³³ that dwell in all the earth” (Dan 4:1³⁴). Nebuchadnezzar’s decree first praises the one God and announces the partial extent of his dominion:³⁵ “It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has wrought toward me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.” (Dan 4:2–3³⁶). The king then recounts a vision that he received, which Daniel interprets as a judgment from God, declaring that the ruler will lose his kingdom and live like a wild beast. He will eat grass and be wet from the dew of the heavens, until he recognizes that “the Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom he will” (Dan 4:25³⁷). The king nonetheless continues to attribute the glory of his kingdom to himself, and therefore, a year after this warning, the prophecy comes to pass.

After seven years of feral life, Nebuchadnezzar is then given his reason back and he finally humbles himself before God. His decree ends with these words: “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven; for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to abase” (Dan 4:37³⁸). The presence of this autobiographical story of redemption, written by the hand of a Gentile, marks the entry of the nations in the biblical foreground. They are no longer mere

³³ This decree was certainly translated into all the languages of the kingdom and proclaimed throughout the empire, prefiguring the Pentecost that would later be the starting point of the translation of the Scriptures into all the languages of the earth and the proclamation of the good news to all peoples and nations.

³⁴ “אַנְהָ נְבוּכַדְנֶצְצַר שְׁלַח הָיוּת בְּבֵיתִי וְרַעְנָן בְּהִיכְלִי:” (Dan 4:1).

³⁵ The king uses the singular word אֱלֹהָא [ʿĕlāhā], which designates the “one true God” in both Biblical and Syriac Aramaic.

³⁶ חֵלֶם חֲזִית וַיְדַחֲלֵנִי וַהֲרַחֲרִין עַל־מַשְׁכְּבִי וַחֲזִי רָאשֵׁי יְבִהֻלְנִי: וּמִנִּי שִׁים” (עֲלִין) שָׁעִים לְהִנְעֹלָה קָדְמִי לְכָל חֲכִימִי בְּכָל דִּי־פֶשֶׁר חֲלָמָא יְהוּדַעְנִי: בְּאֲדִין [עֲלִין] (עֲלִין) חֲרַטְמָא אֲשָׁפִיא [כְּשָׂדִיא] (כְּשָׂדִיא) וְנִזְרִיא וְחֲלָמָא אָמַר אַנְהָ קְדָמִיהוֹן [עֲלִין] “וּפְשָׁרָה לֹא־מְהוּדַעִין לִי:” (Dan 4:2–4)

³⁷ “שְׁלִיט עֲלִיא בְּמַלְכוּת אֲנוּשָׁא וְלִמָּן דִּי יִצְבֵּא וַתִּנָּה” (HND Dan 4:14).

³⁸ אַנְהָ נְבוּכַדְנֶצְצַר מְשַׁבַּח וּמְרוֹמִים וּמְהַדָּר לְמַלְךְ שְׁמִיא דִּי כָל מַעֲבְדוּהִי קִשְׁט” (HND Dan 4:34). “וְאַרְחָתָה דִּין וְדִי מַהֲלָכִין בְּגוּתָהּ יָכַל לְהַשְׁפִּילָהּ”

pagan enemies, but potential servants of God and saints. God will use the hand of the nations in order to establish the recognition of his earthly kingdom, and he will also guide the Hebrews toward a greater proximity with their creator, as he will incarnate himself as one of them, and thereby bring salvation to all peoples.

Following this decree, Nebuchadnezzar disappears from the narrative. The book then tells us the famous story of the writing on the wall that takes place during the reign of his successor. The king is then killed by the hands of the Persian conquerors for his blasphemous use of the temple's treasures, and the narrative of Daniel and the lion's den is unfolded. The story is very similar to the furnace miracle, and it produces the same effect on the local ruler: the new king, Darius, acknowledges the power of God in an imperial decree. Thus ends the historical narrative of the book of Daniel, but several prophecies follow, the first of which (Dan 7) closes the Aramaic section.

The first prophecy of Daniel was written during the reign of Belshazzar. It describes four beasts, considered to be four kings. The last of them attempts to change the divine law and to persecute the saints of God, but the "Ancient of Days," God the Father, opens the books and pronounces his judgment. The beasts are destroyed, and Daniel then sees "one like a son of man," which came before the Father and was given "dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed" (Dan 7:13–14³⁹). This apocalyptic prophecy is also profoundly messianic. It can be seen as an outline of the later Apocalypse of S^t John, probably aimed at strengthening the confidence of the enlarged people of God, composed of both Hebrews and Gentiles. There will be persecutions, there will be destructions, but in the end, the "camp of the saints" (Rev 20:9) will prevail and the reign of God will be established on earth, as it is in heaven. As Nebuchadnezzar was invited to join the people of God, this prophecy will invite all the peoples of the earth as well, giving them the promise of the coming

³⁹ הַזֶּה הָיִיתָ בְּחֻזִּי לִילִיָּא וְאָרוּ עִם עֲנְנֵי שָׁמַיָּא כְּבֹר אֲנִשׁ אֲתָהּ הָיָה וְעַד עֲתִיק׃
וְיֻמַּיָּא מְטָה וְקִדְמוּתִי הִקְרָבוּתִי׃ וְלֵה יְהִיב שְׁלֹטֵן וְיִקָּר וּמְלָכוּ וְכָל עַמְמַיָּא אֲמַיָּא
״וְלִשְׁנָיָא לֵה וּפְלָחוּן שְׁלֹטְנָה שְׁלֹטֵן עָלֵם דִּי לֹא יַעֲדָה וּמְלָכוּתָהּ דִּי לֹא תִחַבֵּל״
(Dan 7:13–14).

of the Messiah and the assurance of the victory of God.

The story of Daniel and his companions, the decree of Nebuchadnezzar, and the “Apocalypse to the Gentiles,” together form a short Aramaic compendium telling of God and his power, and telling of the sins and the violence of men, of their idolatry and their pride. The heart of this part of the narrative mainly insists on the possibility of salvation, the life of a wretched and proud king, who finally turns to God and acknowledges him as supreme ruler. The Aramaic book of Daniel offers a condensed version of the narrative as a whole, from Genesis to the Apocalypse of S^t John, one that is not only addressed to the Hebrews, but also to the Aramaic speaking Gentiles as well.

One of these Gentiles, the Persian king Cyrus, will later end the captivity of the people of Judah, and allow them to return to the Holy Land and to rebuild Jerusalem.⁴⁰ This return will nonetheless not force them to leave all that they received from Babylon behind. They will indeed bring back with them the language of their captors, which will coexist with the Hebrew tongue, and will even ultimately replace it to become the mother tongue of the people of Judea, as exhibited by the Gospels.⁴¹ This plurilinguality induced by both the captivity itself and the fall of the kingdom that it later caused brought on a resentment among the new leaders of the Holy City. The prophet Nehemiah himself mentions the decline of the Hebrew language, which he severely condemned, as shown in the following passage:

In those days also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab; and half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but the language of each people. And I contended with them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair; and I made them take oath in the name of God, saying, ‘You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin on ac-

⁴⁰ Ezr 1.

⁴¹ The Gospels contain numerous Aramaic quotes, spoken by Jesus. This would seem to indicate that it was the main language of the people of Judea during this period. See Mar 5:41, for example.

count of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless foreign women made even him to sin. Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women?' (Neh 13:23–27⁴²)

The whole book contains several admonitions against Gentiles, who are perceived as a threat. The mention of these commands nonetheless does not seem to be necessarily prescriptive: they are not divine commands, and they could be interpreted as mere descriptions of Nehemiah's views. Indeed, the book is surprising in that it does not differentiate between Gentiles who worship the one true God and have received the portion of the Law addressed to them and the idol-worshippers who corrupt the Israelites' faith. More than to defend the monotheistic faith, the separation from the foreign seems to take place so as to protect the linguistic and ethnic identity of the Hebrews. The Judean prophet wants to cling to the Hebrew language at all costs, striving against plurilingualism among the population, seen as a sign of linguistic and cultural degeneracy.

The divine law nonetheless itself becomes bilingual with this episode. It is now written in both Hebrew and Aramaic. Nehemiah's endeavor is thus doomed from the start, as bilingualism will now be necessary to read the Law in its entirety. The Hebrew tongue will know a decline, symbolized by the fact that Nehemiah's book will be the last book of the Scriptures written in the tongue of Moses,⁴³ according to the biblical chronology. It will nonetheless not disappear, as the Law and its language will continue to be learned, as a second language.

⁴² נָם בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם רָאִיתִי אֶת־הַיְּהוּדִים הַשִּׁבּוּ נָשִׁים [אַשְׁדּוּרִיּוֹת] (אַשְׁדּוּרִיּוֹת) “(עֲמֻנִיּוֹת) [עֲמֻנִיּוֹת] מִזֻּבְנוֹת: וּבְנֵיהֶם חָצִי מִדְּבַר אֲשֻׁדּוּרִית וְאֵינָם מְכִירִים לְדְבַר יְהוּדִית וְכָל־שׁוֹן עִם וְעִם: וְאָרִיב עִמָּם וְאֶקְלָלָם וְאָכָה מֵהֶם אֲנָשִׁים וְאֶמְרָטָם וְאֶשְׁבִּיעֵם בְּאֱלֹהִים אֲסִתְּנֶנּוּ בְּנִתֵיכֶם לְבָנֵיהֶם וְאֲסִתְּשָׂאוּ מִבְּנֹתֵיהֶם לְבָנֵיכֶם וְלָכֶם: הֲלוֹא עַל־אֱלֹהִי חֲטָא־שְׁלֹמֹה מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנוֹיָם הָרַבִּים לֹא־הָיָה מֶלֶךְ כְּמֹהוּ וְאֶהוּב לֹא־הָיוּ הָיָה וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ אֱלֹהִים מֶלֶךְ עַל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל נִס־אוֹתוֹ הִחְטִיאוּ הַנָּשִׁים הַנִּכְרִיּוֹת: וְלָכֶם הַנִּשְׁמָע לַעֲשֹׂת אֶת כָּל־הָרָעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת לְמַעַל בְּאֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהַשִּׁיב נָשִׁים: ”נִכְרִיּוֹת: (Neh 13:23–27).

⁴³ The book of Nehemiah is the last book whose original text remains in its original Hebrew.

5.2 The meta-narrative of language in the Babylon episode

The Babylon narrative, which has been described in the first part of this chapter, may appear to be simply the story of a divine punishment falling upon a people ungrateful toward its creator, similar to the common interpretation of the confusion of tongues. As was previously done concerning this other episode, a pondering of the effects of this event on man's language can lead us to uncover another, less apparent dimension of this famous narrative. The exile of a part of the people of Judea to Babylon is indeed more than a mere earthly exile from its ancestral home, it is also, and perhaps even foremost, the occasion for the Hebrews to embark on a worldly journey, by leaving the house of being that was their home until then in order to discover another, one which will soon become a new home to them.

From the time of man's creation until the episode of Babel, all men shared a common house of being. After the confusion, language is then transformed, from a simple house of being into a village, where each people of earth inhabits its own house of being; where each has its own language through which it sees the creation. At this time, the meta-narrative is more particularly focused on one of these peoples: the one that inherited the Adamic house. After the Babel episode, this people already had encountered other houses, but only from a distance. Its members noticed their existence, but they did not dwell in any of them, and these other languages remained unintelligible. The Babylon episode will initiate the appearance of a new experience in the life of man: the departure from one's own house of being, one's home, to get to know and dwell in another. Few elements are known concerning the other peoples in the narrative. It is reasonable nonetheless to think that each people will sooner or later experience the same encounter and appropriation of a new dwelling. The following interpretation of this episode will therefore not only describe an experience restricted to the Hebrews. It will also be extended to represent the similar experiences of all the other peoples of the narrative universe, with only slight differences.

In this section, the implications of this physical and meta-physical journey will first be examined, so as to see how the re-

lation between the men of the meta-narrative and their worldly dwelling is transformed by this so-called captivity. Far from being an imprisonment, the Babylon episode may indeed mark the beginning of a new era for the men who are ready to seize the opportunity offered to them. The physical captivity of the narrative may hide a meta-physical liberation in the meta-narrative, and by forcing the Hebrews to leave their home, the Babylonians may, in fact, give them something far more precious than all the riches that they took as spoil: they will give the Hebrews a possibility to truly see what it means to be homely.

5.2.1 The house of being before Babylon: a home

In order to see the effect of the exile on the language of the Hebrews, and on their lives, one must first have a clear vision of what their condition was prior to this experience. The Adamic house is the only house that they have inhabited at that time, and this not only as individuals, but also as a people. Each member of this people has indeed only dwelt in one house, a house shared with their kin. In technical language, they have always been monolingual, with their language being the sole idiom of their world. The Babel *ek-stasis* already offered them an opportunity to witness the existence of other houses. The meta-φύσις already formed a village, a group of different independent dwellings, but until the Babylonian event, men remained cloistered within their own house, witnessing the existence of others but completely oblivious to what was inside them, and how they differed from their own abode.

Contrary to Adam, the actors of the meta-narrative of the Babylon episode do not start to dwell in their house after having built it, but rather receive it as a gift from their parents and the other men with whom they share the same earthly surroundings. Soon after their birth, each member of the people is brought to the Adamic house and is taught how to dwell in it, how to appropriate it, that is, with themselves part of the house, and the house part of themselves, both shaping each other. The first instance of an act of dwelling of these men is done according to their *nature*, following the flow of the Φύσις, that is, with their will playing only a trivial part in the appropriation of the house. The so-called *mother tongue* is indeed always learned without resistance,

without awareness of the learning process, and without reflection. This initial dwelling experience is fully part of the becoming of any human being, as ζῶον λόγον ἔχον, as a creature that dwells in a house of being, distinct from the other animals that live their existence on the naked earth. This capacity to appropriate the first house that they encounter is present in almost every member of the human race, as a natural, physical process marking the entry of every human into a world, in contrast with their entry onto the earth, at birth. This process spans across several years, starting from the first words of the infant, and yet most will not remember anything of this discovery of their first dwelling. As the years of learning go by, this house will not only become familiar, it will also become a **home**.

What, however, does the word “home” mean? For Hölderlin, home is a place “where the blossoming paths are known to me,”⁴⁴ where “everything seems familiar; even people passing by greet each other as if they were Friends, and every face appears like kin.”⁴⁵ From this poetic insight, one could say that to be at-home is to have a close relation to his dwelling. It is also more than this: to be at home within a house of being means *to be one with it*, to both be its master and let himself be subjected to its power, according to the nature of the house, which is both built by men and provides them the means to be truly human, that is, beings concerned with their own being. In other words, it shapes men. The house thus becomes an extension of themselves, as their will can find pre-existing vessels where it can be poured in: the signs composing the house, which were mostly forged by their remote ancestors and handed over to them through tradition, even though they all have the ability to forge new ones themselves. Man may be led to think that he “uses” the house as a means to express himself, even though he may also find himself being “used” as a cog in the machinery of the house, which predates and will survive him. The descendants of Adam begin their earthly lives by being thrown on the earth, in a physical environment that was shaped before them, but they soon after experience a second kind of thrownness. They

⁴⁴ Heidegger, Martin. *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*. Amherst, N.Y: Humanity Books, 2000: 33. Print; Original German: “Heimzugeln, wo bekannt blühende Wege mir sind.” From: GA 4: 15.

⁴⁵ Hölderlin, Friedrich. *Poems of Friedrich Hölderlin: The Fire of the Gods Drives Us to Set Forth by Day and by Night*. San Francisco: Ithuriel's Spear, 2004: 29. Print.

are thrown into a house, built by other men, a house that they must first discover and master if they later want to contribute to its edification.

To be at-home is thus fundamentally different than to simply discover a dwelling among others, and this mode of dwelling affects man's relation to his own being. As the German master says, language is the house of being, but this being does not occur by simply being located inside this abode. Man indeed first needs to make it a home; first needs to let himself become one with it. Only then does he become human, dwelling in a home and not simply passively beholding a pre-built structure. Any house can be appropriated and become one's home. The first dwelling, the first home, nonetheless has the peculiarity of being a **gift**. It is naturally appropriated by every infant, only requiring interactions between the newcomer and older dwellers. As seen earlier, the house carries a tradition, a world that has been built across generations and through which men see the earth and the skies. This world is given to the infant, without him realizing it, and his "mother tongue" thereby becomes part of himself. He does not need to be a poet in order to be human. He does not need to bring the earth to the world by himself because his people already built a world that he can inhabit. Adam was forced to be a poet because his dwelling had yet to be built. Facing a blank slate and being given a piece of chalk, he was led to create through *poiesis*. The men of later times are nonetheless facing an already elaborate painting, which precisely describes most of what they want to express. They therefore have far less incentive to create something entirely new and to be true poets, as they can appropriate the poetic creations of others, adding or correcting minute details if need be.

It was previously asserted that one does not need to be a true poet in order to dwell in a home. The home is nevertheless linked with the poetic, and to see the nature of this link can help us shed light on the nature of the home, and on the role it plays in man's destiny. But one must first distinguish two major types of *poiesis*. The first type involves bringing the earth to the world, an example of which is Adam's creation of the names of the animals. This type of poetry is fundamentally grounded in the earth, in the Φύσις, but for the men who inherited a home built by their forefathers, this kind of *poiesis* requires an extremely strong willpower, a poet's

soul, something that is not given to every man. Few men will indeed ever feel the need to add something to their world directly from the earth, feeling that it lacks something that could not be constructed from other pre-existing signs. This nonetheless does not mean that other men would not themselves want to contribute to the edification of their world. The non-poet, the servant of the Τέχνη, may be oblivious to the strife of world and earth, which is the main preoccupation of the true poet, but he may still create, grounding his works in the world itself, initiating a secondary *poiesis* that builds up the world using the world itself as its source, as its bricks and mortar. Every man masters his mother tongue, meaning that he is always able to ex-press himself using the signs composing his home, and can use them to build it further. He can thus be a builder without being a true poet. He can create from the creation of others, and base himself on the work of the true poets. It is in this sense that the nature of the home is linked with the poetic: to be at-home is to feel like one is master of a house, and that one can create using its power, as it forms an extension of one's will.

In phenomenological language, the home is a house that is made ready-to-hand, that is, a house that is considered as a “tool” for the ex-pression of the will, something that is felt like a part of oneself, and can be “used” to fulfill a purpose. This readiness-to-hand is one of the foremost characteristics of the home. The intricacy of the link between a man and his home can be felt in the following verse of Hölderlin: “It is the land of your birth, the soil of your homeland, *what you seek, it is near, already comes to meet you.*”⁴⁶ When a house of being is made a home, it means that one is familiar with it, that every part of it is close and ready to be seen or touched. When a man seeks to ex-press something, that is, when his will is looking for a vessel in which it can be poured, such a fitting vessel is naturally to be found nearby. The home is therefore also a place where man does not lack, a place where everything is ready and in place, waiting for the owner. When a language is made a home, it means that it is mastered. It means that man has become so familiar with it that it becomes

⁴⁶ Heidegger, Martin. *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*. Amherst, N.Y: Humanity Books, 2000: 27. Print. (Emphasis added); Original German: “Freilich wohl! das Geburtsland ists, der Boden der Heimath, Was du suchest, es ist nahe, begegnet dir schon.” From: GA 4:10.

a natural extension of his will. It is perceived as an instrument that can be used for ex-pression, and the completion of all sorts of communicative tasks. Man thus seldom thinks before speaking, and even less reflects on his choice of words, as his language is flowing naturally, and he can hardly distinguish his own will from his words.

Furthermore, a home is also a place where all that lies within its walls is unconcealed to the owner, as the hearth in its midst enlightens all its corners: "The friendly openness of the homeland, and everything there that is brightened up, and glows and gleams, and casts forth its light, comes forth in one single gracious appearance upon one's arrival at the door of the homeland."⁴⁷ The brightness of the home is what allows man to see. In the case of the house of being, it does not imply a vision of what is within its walls, but rather a vision of what lies beyond them, as the blocks forming the house are windows opened toward the universe and not mere opaque bricks. Being at-home, a man can see and appropriate the skies, the earth, and parts of the world itself. This homeliness brings a form of unconcealment, and with it something more: "what is most inviting in the homeland, and what comes to meet him half-way, is called 'full of joy,' the joyful."⁴⁸ The banality of joy may make us forget its profound meaning. In the aforementioned quote, what is translated as the "joyful" is the German word *das Freudige*. Heidegger nonetheless also associates this word with another, whose dual meaning in the German language may here be more fitting to describe the result of the homecoming⁴⁹: *Heitere*, combining the meaning of *das Heitere*, "joy," and

⁴⁷ Ibid.^t: 33; Original German: "Das freundlich Offene, das Erhellte, das Schimmernde, das Glänzende, das Leuchtende der Heimat begegnet in einem einzigen freundlichen Scheinen bei der Ankunft an der Pforte des Landes." From: GA 4: 14.

⁴⁸ Ibid.^t: 34; Original German: "Wie sollen wir dieses stille Scheinen, in dem alles, Dinge und Menschen, dem Suchenden den Gruß entbietet, nennen? Wir müssen das Einladende der Heimat, das schon begegnet, mit dem Wort benennen, das die ganze Dichtung »Heimkunft« überleuchtet, mit dem Wort »das Freudige.«" From: GA 4: 15.

⁴⁹ The passage associating the two concepts of joy can hardly be translated in a satisfactory manner. In the published English translation, this association is not clearly perceivable. It will be nonetheless given here, for reference: Ibid.: 34–35 "The cloud waits in an open brightness that gladdens the waiting. The cloud is cheered in this gladness. What it composes, the joyful, is gaiety. We also call it the cheerful, but from now on we have to use this word in a strict

die Heitere, “brightness.”⁵⁰ This is what will here be named the “brightful joy,” and that will designate what is experienced following an unconcealment: the joy of vision, of being familiar and able to appropriate something, to peer into the clear nature of a thing.

To be at-home within a house of being is to experience the brightful joy of dwelling in it, that is, to see the earth through the brightness of the home, and feel the joy of being one with it, through the readiness-to-hand of language that makes men beings concerned with the nature of being. The home is nonetheless just one source of brightful joy among others. It is present in all forms of real unconcealments. The house of being of the generation taken to Babylon, however, is not simply a home among others. It is their first and sole dwelling, until then.

The house of Adam is the home of the Hebrews. It also was the home of mankind as a whole until Babel, but now, only they remain as custodians of the original home, the birthplace of man as such. The pioneers have for long left it to build and dwell in other abodes, exploring the earth and new worlds. The Hebrews, however, stayed close to the source of their being, passing the tradition of Adam unto their descendants. They thus possess a special link with the first man and the first laws, as both the first signs forged by the Deity and Adam, and the first commandments given to mankind, are naturally intelligible to them but not to any other people. As their mother-tongue, the Adamic language is given to them as ready-to-hand, as their home, and the grounding of the first language and the first laws seems readily apparent to them, without requiring any lengthy conscious learning process. The Torah given to them at Mount Sinai can be read to the people as a whole without impediment, as they all share the gift of dwelling in the same home as Moses, a house that remains very similar to what it was in the prophet’s time, even centuries after the Exodus from Egypt. The pioneers, on the other hand, cannot come to know the Torah in such a natural manner. The custodians have

sense: what has been cleared and brightened up”; Original German: “Die offene Helle, in der die Wolke verweilt, heitert dieses Verweilen auf. Die Wolke ist aufgeheitert in das Heitere. Was sie dichtet, das »Freudige«, ist das Heitere. Wir nennen dies auch das »Aufgeräumte«. Wir denken dies Wort jetzt und künftig in einem strengen Sinne. Das Aufgeräumte ist in seiner Räumlichkeit freigemacht, gelichtet und gefügt.” From: GA 4: 16.

⁵⁰ The two words are distinguished by their grammatical gender, *das Heitere* being a “neuter” word, while *die Heitere* is a “feminine” one.

been given a special role to play, as we will see, a role that is characterized by the nature of their home. The way they tread on the path of thinking is also closely tied to their home, and its specificities. The custody of the original home lightens their path. This, however, comes with a price to pay, as every source of light ineluctably also casts shadows, and thus conceals as it reveals.

5.2.2 The *lethe* of the home

The custodians' dwelling is a source of their identity as a people. The Adamic house that they alone received as their inheritance offers them a direct connection to the origin of mankind, and to the first world that the gift of language opened. This direct line to the origin is their abode, a house of being that is their own, and that they master. This house is nonetheless something more than their only *dwelling*, it is also their first *home*, one that they are all given to inhabit unconditionally, and that they received from their parents during the first years of their lives. The combination of the fact that their house is both the only one that they know and one that they have always inhabited, without any memory of the time when they had no language, renders them inevitably blind to the role played by their dwelling and to the effect that it has on their life, their thought, and their being.

Man's home unconceals the universe to him, but it also conceals itself. It conceals the house and what it means for him to be at-home in it. The *ek-stasis* of Babel offered men a possibility to see a part of two different houses, and therefore a part of what the "houseness" of a house is. At this point, this contrast between the intelligible and the unintelligible only revealed the outer appearance of these other dwellings, as men could not enter the other houses and witness how their architectures differed from the one of their home. The meta-physical architecture through which men see the earth and the skies thus remains out of their sight. Engulfed in the readiness-to-hand of his home, man may ignore that he is a dweller altogether. The Hebrews are in such a situation before the captivity, and this fact has profound consequences on both their earthly and worldly lives.

Each one of the 72 peoples of the post-Babel universe has been given a different house of being to inhabit, one which consti-

tutes the heart of their national and ethnic identity, distinguishing their people from the others. Each one of these houses is built according to a different architecture, which acts as a filtering lens, organizing the universe into different sets of “things” that are all interconnected by the structure of the house. When they have known no other house than the first home given to them in their infancy, the nature and the effect of this lens remain hidden: man will believe that his perception of the earth corresponds to what the earth really is. This *lethe* is inherent to the first home. One who has never left it will indeed always imagine that his world is *the* world; that his vision of the universe is equal to what the universe really is. Hölderlin was well aware of the question of the blindness to what is one’s own, as he said that: “we shall learn nothing more difficult than to freely use our national character [das Nationelle] . . . the free use of what is proper to one is the most difficult.”⁵¹ This means that one who has never ventured outside of the “national” home will inevitably remain blind to the nature of the specificity of his people.

The effect of monolingualism is nevertheless broader than a simple blindness to the home. It can indeed skew man’s vision of the universe as a whole, making him believe that he “understands” it, and it can also give him the impression that to be a master of his home makes him a master of the earth and the skies. The *lethe* of the architecture of the house, of its inner structure, conceals the difference between sign and referent, between the blocks forming the house and what they point toward, on the earth in particular. This blurring of the difference between world and earth, induced by the seclusion within a single house of being, almost inevitably leads to the creation of a sort of idol. Not idols of clay, representing deities from men’s imagination, but rather what we can call *idola domī*, idols of the house, similar to Francis Bacon’s *idola fori*, the idols of the marketplace that designate “idols which have crept into the understanding through the alliances of words and names.”⁵²

⁵¹ Ibid.^t: 112; Original German: “Wir lernen nichts schwerer als das Nationelle frei gebrauchen . . . der freie Gebrauch des Eigenen das schwerste ist.” From: Ibid.^o: 87, text in brackets added.

⁵² Bacon, Francis, and Robertson, John M. *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*. London: Routledge, 2013: 269. Print; Original Latin: “At idola fori omnium molestissima sunt; quae ex foedere verborum et nominum se insinuarunt in intellectum.” From: Bacon, Francis. *The Works of Francis Bacon*. J. Johnson, 1803: 14. Print. (Novum Organum LIX).

The idols of the house are signs that are believed to be objective representations of what they refer to. A man who clearly sees the idol-sign is led to believe that he clearly sees what the sign points toward, that is, he mistakenly believes that his mastery of his world implies a mastery of the universe as it really is, independently from him. This idolization of the house also induces a phenomenon by which its inhabitants fail to see that their world was largely built by men like themselves, and that it is the result of a poetic process that is highly subjective.

The inertia and authority of tradition make men blind to the fact that their house is not a divinely ordained temple, and its building blocks were sometimes cut out according to arbitrary shapes. They nonetheless have the power to transform the house, to mend or improve it, but often fail to do so precisely because its blocks have been seen as idols, something that leads man to believe in the illusion that these signs are “natural” representations of the earth and the skies, that their meaning is rigidly fixed, and that they are “understood.” This phenomenon will here be called “sklero-noia”⁵³, the illusion of fixed meaning and understanding. As Dürckheim tells us:

Man survives in the world by means of a certain kind of consciousness which, by its crystallized concepts, organizes life into a succession of rigid structures. Through these he perceives the world rationally, masters it systematically, and orders it according to fixed values. It is just this form of existence that veils his awareness of Divine Being.⁵⁴

It is a natural consequence of the seclusion within the home, of being isolated from the village, from other houses and worlds. Men in such a situation have few weapons to defend themselves and not

⁵³ This word is formed of two Greek root words: σκληρός (“hard,” “rigid”) and νόος/νοῦα (“mind,” “thought”).

⁵⁴ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971: 17. Print; Original German: “In der Welt besteht der Mensch kraft eines Bewußtseins, das das Leben in festen Begriffen und Ordnungen einfängt, mit denen er die Welt rational wahrnimmt, zielbewußt meistert und feststehenden Werten gemäß formt. Doch eben in dieser Daseinsform wird das Sein im Bewußtsein verhüllt.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Der Alltag als Übung: vom Weg zur Verwandlung*. Bern: Hans Huber, 1962: 14. Print.

fall prey to these idols, as they simply cannot see what lies beyond their world without its filtering lens. S^t Ephrem also warned about this danger:

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܝܗܐ	Preserve, Lord, our faith from that
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܝܗܐ	which is no faith, and also our
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܝܗܐ	knowledge from that which is no
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܝܗܐ	knowledge! [Mere] names have we
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܝܗܐ	gotten: defraud ye not yourselves
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܗܐ ܕܝܗܐ	with their names. ⁵⁵

This predicament will nonetheless not necessarily continue indefinitely.

The idols of the house and the skleronoia both have a wide-ranging effect on man's life, and on his walk on the path of thinking, in particular. In the case of the Hebrews, the divine law that was given to them at Mount Sinai was given in a particular language. It forms a painting on the walls of their house. It is placated over the pre-established sign-blocks composing their home. The Law is language: it depends on it, and cannot exist independently from it. The idolization of language thus ineluctably affects man's relationship with the Law, and his relationship with the path of thinking, which is a path carved in language. The blindness to the world in which man lives, induced by his seclusion, thus implies that the Law itself may also become an idol. Man may fail to see that the words composing the Law are tied to a particular house and world, and that they are mere signs rather than an objective delimitation of the paths of good and evil in the $\Phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ itself.

The Law, and therefore the path that is shown through it, is necessarily tied to a particular world, as man cannot perceive anything without the mediation of a world, outside of language. This nonetheless does not mean that what is good and evil on the earth, and man's essential being, are themselves tied to a particular world and a particular language. It is here important that

⁵⁵ Translation from: Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847: 222. Print; Original Syriac from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1961: 122. Print.

we ourselves avoid the pitfall of the *idols of the house* while we investigate this delicate question. We must keep in mind the distinction between the earth and the skies on the one hand, and our worlds that represent them on the other. The Law guiding man's destiny is worldly, but it also represents the earth and the skies. There is no "transcendental signified," no "transcendental law." There is no realm of "forms" or "ideas," because there cannot be any "thing" outside of the house of being: beyond the boundaries of language and the world, only **no-thing-ness** is to be found. There is, however, a transcendence, something beyond the world: the Φύσις itself, the living earth and skies, which predate man and their worlds.

Hence, it is futile for man to search for a "truth" beyond the words of the revealed message and the Law, because there can be no truth outside the world. Truth is inherently worldly, as far as he can know it. The path of thinking leading man to the manifestation of his essential being is nonetheless both earthly and worldly, and it is by guiding man on this path that the Law and the revelation find their purpose. The Law is thus tied to a particular language, the Adamic house in the present case, but the path is not. The path of everyone includes their world(s), but it is also earthly, and part of the Φύσις. The *lethe* of the house and of its architecture induced by the seclusion renders man blind to this difference between the representation of the path offered by his world and the Law on the one hand, and the earthly essence of the Φύσις, which transcends both, on the other.

In order for the man of the meta-narrative to fulfill his destiny, he will thus have to overcome the *lethe* of the home, and the Deity will offer him such an opportunity. Until now, man remained cloistered in his home for years, as in a cocoon that gave him time to grow and mature. But the seals of the house will soon be broken, and he will be given a sight of the village, a sight of the others houses of being around his home. The German poet said that "the free use of what is one's own is what is most difficult,"⁵⁶ but the German thinker justly remarks that "it is not only what is one's own that must be learned, but the foreign as well. While the free use of what is one's own is indeed the most difficult, the un-

⁵⁶ TBA. Original German: "Der freie Gebrauch des Eigenen [ist] das schwerste." From: GA 52: 114.

derstanding [Beständnis] of the foreign remains also problematic, and raises its own difficulties.”⁵⁷ In order for man to appropriate his home, and to know what it means to be homely, he will have to embark on a journey far from home, as “the sea-voyage is part of the finding of what is one’s own,”⁵⁸ and this departure toward the *Kolonie*,⁵⁹ to borrow a term of Heidegger, will be initiated by the emergence of a new language, appearing in the Hebrews’ life.

5.2.3 The emergence of the foreign

The annunciation of the captivity to the residents of Jerusalem by the three envoys from Babylon constitutes the first encounter of the Hebrews with a foreign tongue mentioned in the narrative. In the meta-narrative, this, at first, only represents an encounter with the unintelligible, similar to the one experienced by the different peoples of earth following the confusion of tongues. Here, on the other hand, the encounter will also be the starting point of an adventure, a journey away from the home, and the beginning of the exploration of the village of tongues. The village predates the captivity, but cloistered within their home, the sons of Moses until then never passed its threshold so as to explore other worlds. Something new thus emerges in their life: another house, the house of Aram,⁶⁰ toward which they are taken.

The journey undertaken by the captives in the narrative is nevertheless not the result of their own will, of a *Fernweh*, a longing for the distant, but rather an action commanded by the Deity, making the Babylonians an instrument for their removal from their earthly homeland, the land of Israel. In the meta-narrative, such a removal also occurs, but it is a removal from their worldly home, the house of Adam, rather than from their earthly land. In both

⁵⁷ TBA. Original German: “. . . nicht erst das Eigene, auch das Fremde muß gelernt sein. Wenn nämlich der freie Gebrauch des Eigenen das Schwerste ist, dann liegt darin, daß auch das Beständnis des Fremden schwer bleibt und seine eigene Not hat.” From: GA 52: 188.

⁵⁸ TBA. Original German: “Zum Finden des Eigenen gehört die Seefahrt.” From: GA 52: 188.

⁵⁹ GA 4: 93. The term is itself borrowed from Hölderlin, but appropriated by Heidegger in his commentaries on the German poet.

⁶⁰ Aram is one of the sons of Shem, son of Noah (See Gen 10). It is also the name of the region where the Aramaic language was spoken, which is located in modern day Syria and Iraq.

cases, the captives have little choice in the matter: they are forcibly taken, led to Babylon and to the house of Aram, as captives rather than simple wanderers. The term of “captivity,” although now commonly accepted to describe this event, may nonetheless conceal one of the main purposes of the journey. In the narrative, the Hebrews are indeed physically taken in chains by ruthless invaders, but in the meta-narrative, they are children of the Deity, led by their Father to discover a new world. The exile to Babylon can thus be seen as a teaching rather than as a punishment for their iniquity and their disbelief. Hence, the exiled are not undertaking an aimless wandering, they are being taught. In the narrative, they travel on the earth toward a new land, and in the meta-narrative, they travel to a new world, which for now remains unintelligible to them. In the present case, it is far easier for the captives to travel the earth than to discover a new world, but rewards come with efforts, and it is their meta-physical journey that will offer them the greatest opportunity to progress on the path toward their destiny.

The change of station will nonetheless only occur when the new house is not only beheld from outside, like during an encounter with the unintelligible, but also entered, discovered, and finally inhabited. This nonetheless requires more than simply taking a step over a threshold, as in a material house. To venture inside a house of being implies a *learning*, which is not an instantaneous event, but rather a long process, one that can be extended over a considerable period. The narrative of the book of Daniel mentions that the Israelites were taught the language and wisdom of Babylon for three years (Dan 1:5). These three years are what it takes for them to discover the house of Aram, and make it theirs. In the narrative, their earthly journey ended at the door of Babylon, but in the meta-narrative, their journey begins with their new education, with their entrance into a new house of being. They were taken in chains on the earth, but in the world, the journey will demand not only cooperation but also an active commitment. Learning to dwell in a new house of being, learning a new language, can then become a profoundly spiritual experience, an experience of transformation of one’s being as one changes of dwelling. But how does one learn to do so? How does one enter and dwell in a new house of being?

The term ‘house of being’ is not an empty metaphor. Like

an earthly dwelling, the house of being and the world it opens are composed of “things,” meta-physical things, but things nonetheless. To learn about worldly things is not so different than to learn about the earthly ones. For Heidegger, “learning is a kind of grasping and appropriating.”⁶¹ It is to grasp, to take (*nehmen*), not in its physical sense, but rather as perception (*ver-nehmen*): grasping by the mind. Furthermore, “to take means in some way to take possession of a thing and have disposal over it.”⁶² When a teacher is involved, as was the case in Babylon, he is the one selecting what will be learned. He hands what is to be learned over to the pupil, but it is nonetheless still necessary for him to actively take it. This taking is the essence of learning.

Teaching and learning thus are the two characters of a subtle dialogue, in which both parties play an active role. The student is active, but not in control. The teacher generally is in control, but he must often relinquish it to let the learning take place. What is learned by grasping is nonetheless not the thing in itself: “we cannot learn a thing, e.g., a weapon; we can learn only its use. Learning is therefore a way of taking and appropriating in which the use is appropriated.”⁶³ One cannot learn a thing, but one can learn the nature of a thing, and this distinction between nature and use corresponds to the aforementioned distinction between presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand. Thus, the learning of the essence is different than the learning of the use: to learn to “use” a language is different than to learn its nature.

In order to make a new house a home, a man must learn the sign-blocks composing it, that is, he must be able to “use” them. All its dwellers have learned to make the blocks ready-to-hand, but few will ever behold their essence distinctly. It is nonetheless important to keep in mind that this ready-to-hand “use” of a dwelling does not imply any real object-subject relationship between man and the house. He is always as much being “used”

⁶¹ Heidegger, Martin. *What Is a Thing?* Lanham: University Press of America, 1985: 71. Print; Original German: “Lernen — das ist eine Art des Aufnehmens und Aneignens.” From: GA 41: 71.

⁶² Ibid.^t: 71; Original German: “Weise von einem Ding Besitz ergreifen und darüber verfügen.” From: GA 41: 71.

⁶³ Ibid.^t: 71; Original German: “Aber wir können strenggenommen ein Ding nicht lernen, z. B. eine Waffe; lernen können wir nur den Gebrauch des Dinges. Das Lernen ist demnach ein Nehmen und Aneignen, wobei der Gebrauch angeeignet wird.” From: GA 41:71.

by the house as he “uses” it, because his own being is dependent on and constrained by the house. The learning that occurs during this emergence is thus fundamentally one of readiness-to-hand, the learning of a practice: how to appropriate the house; how to be able to use its building blocks; how to interact with the world it opens up and even how to contribute to its edification. In the case of the meta-narrative, the Israelites step into the house when the divinely appointed teachers start their instruction. The manner in which the new dwelling is appropriated by them will now be examined.

It all starts with a present-at-hand encounter with the house and the blocks composing it, when the learner faces them for the first time. For him, both remain unintelligible. He cannot see beyond their surface, and see the signifieds beyond the appearance of the blocks. He neither sees the general architecture of the house, something that would first require that he clearly see through the building-blocks composing it. As it was described concerning Babel, the man encountering a new, unintelligible dwelling is nevertheless not completely blind to its nature. Seeing the house and its building-blocks as present-at-hand, he perceives something about them: he perceives them as “things.” He sees words as words, and the house as a language. As the German master remarks: “we do not first learn what a weapon is when we become familiar with this rifle or with a certain model of rifle. We already know that in advance and must know it; otherwise we could not perceive the rifle as such at all.”⁶⁴ Here is the doorway to the house: to identify the unintelligible as something to be learned, something that possesses a meaning beyond its surface, and a readiness-to-hand beyond its presence-at-hand. The initial present-at-hand perception of the new house and its building-blocks is nonetheless only very superficial, and it does not constitute a perception of their essence, as their “use” and purpose remain concealed for now. They know the thing as a thing, but have yet to see its thingness.

The teacher hands over a block to the pupil, so that he would take it when he utters the first words to be learned. Doing so, he identifies these words as building blocks of the new house, and this

⁶⁴ Ibid.^t: 72; Original German: “Wenn wir dieses Gewehr oder auch ein bestimmtes Gewehrmodell kennenlernen, lernen wir nicht t erst, was eine Waff e ist, sondern dies wissen wir schon vorher und müssen es wissen, sonst könnten wir das Gewehr überhaupt nicht als solches vern ehmen.” From: GA 41: 73.

nature is easily perceived by the aspiring dweller. The appearance of the blocks, that is, their nature as signifiers, can nonetheless already be perceived inadequately: the student may fail to distinguish the sounds composing them, or the way they are written on a tablet. The teacher is nevertheless present in order to correct such mis-perceptions. To perceive the nature of the block as signifier is only the first, and perhaps the easiest step. In order to appropriate a sign as sign, one must be able to “use” it. The purpose of the signs, as it was seen earlier, is to make the $\Phi\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma\iota\varsigma$, the continuous universe, intelligible as a set of discontinuous “things.” The signs therefore re-present the $\Phi\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma\iota\varsigma$, as a world, and each one of the blocks forming the house is pointing out toward a specific aspect of the universe. The learning of a pre-existing sign thus requires that one be taught what it “signifies,” what the signifier is pointing to: this is the main task of the teacher. Unless the teacher is also a dweller of the original home of the students, in which case he can attempt to teach through translation,⁶⁵ the teacher will have to start from the ground up. He will have to find a common phenomenological foundation upon which he will then build his unveiling of the rest of the house. This is mostly done by *monstratio*, that is, by showing by pointing out “things,” such as persons or objects.

The learning thus begins with the earthly, with the “things” that are the most easily and universally identifiable as individual things. Pointing out a “thing” while uttering its name reveals the semiosis between the worldly signifier and the earthly signified.⁶⁶ It is a re-enactment of the poetic event that led to the creation of the sign. It would be incredibly hard to start learning a language starting with meta-physical concepts like “time,” “space,” or “idea.” It is, on the other hand, relatively easy to learn that the word *kas* (ܟܫܐ) means “a cup” in Aramaic if I point a finger toward the drinking vessel while pronouncing it distinctly and repeatedly.

Even such a fundamental and seemingly easy learning process nevertheless is not without its own difficulties. Indeed, Quine’s “gavagai” thought-experiment,⁶⁷ mentioned in the second chapter

⁶⁵ Nb.: Translation has yet to appear in the narrative.

⁶⁶ It should nonetheless be noted that signifier and signified are both earthly and worldly.

⁶⁷ Quine, Willard Van Orman, Patricia Smith Churchland, and Dagfinn Føllesdal. *Word and Object*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013: 4. Print.

(§ 2.2.4.2), shows us that such a learning by *monstratio* entirely depends on the accurate perception of what the teacher meant, of what the “thing” that he names is: when pointing a finger toward a rabbit and shouting “gavagai,” a certain indeterminacy of reference indeed inevitably remains, as it is hard for the learner to determine whether the word designates the rabbit as a whole, a part of the animal, or just an edible food in general. Such indeterminacy is unavoidable, but it nonetheless can and must be minimized so that the house can stand, using the support of the community of dwellers. To dwell in a house is to join the agreement that is language, that is, to see and accept the correspondence between a set of conventional signifiers designating a set of conventional signifieds. The incommensurable indeterminacy of all languages implies that even though the house is fundamentally one and shared by all dwellers, it is also partly specific to an individual, as each dweller supports specific parts of it, and sees it from a standpoint unique to him. For the learner, aspiring to be part of this community, the individual component of the nature of the house certainly is an obstacle, but even though the dwellers do not share the exact same house and world, they do share something in common, something shared by all humans: they all dwell on the same earth, upon which all houses are built.

In order to be successful and efficient, the beginning of the appropriation of a new house must thus be based on what both the home and the other house have in common: they are built on the same earthly ground. They are both based on a phenomenological experience of the earth that is shared by all men. The dwellers of different houses may have chosen to re-present the Φύσις into different sets of “things” in their world, but they all share a large part of their experience of the earth and the Φύσις. They share their basic earthly needs for food, water, and shelter, no matter what their world, language, and culture may be. Upon this common ground can the learning start and the new house be discovered and appropriated. Once it is done, the teacher can then begin to show his world to the pupil. The unveiling of the new world nonetheless requires more than the learning of individual signs, taught by *monstratio*, as the house of being is more than an aggregate of sign-blocks. It is a building, a coherent assembly in which all blocks share a burden and are in contact with others, forming a whole, according to a specific architecture. In order for

the new world to appear and be dwelt, the architecture and the links between the blocks must also be learned.

As Saussure taught us, the house stands by a play of differences between signs:⁶⁸ the architecture is thus formed according to the way signs are linked, according to their similarity or opposition to other signs. Such an architecture can be partly grounded in the earth, but it will also necessarily be partly arbitrary, the result of the building of the dwellers. The new world is learned, and the house begins to be inhabited by the learners, once they are able to perceive the architecture of the house, through the dis-discovery of the way the individual signs form a whole. Starting from the ground up, from the earthly, the student can progressively gain sight of the higher, more abstract parts of the world. These abstract parts are what is not itself grounded directly in the phenomenon but rather is built from the world itself, that is, signs pointing toward other signs rather than the earth. Once the foundation of the world is sufficiently familiar, the learner can then be taught without requiring a grounding in the common soil that is found between the houses. He can then learn through *explanations*, which are signs used to teach other signs. In order to learn from an ex-planation, one does not need to rely on the earth. One solely needs to master a sufficiently large part of the house, to master the core of a language. The new world that is discovered through ex-planation may be almost completely grounded in the clouds, without impeding its learning by the student. The new house is thus progressively dis-discovered. To dwell in a house nonetheless means more than simply beholding it.

In order for the learning to begin, it was seen that the learner must have a certain foreknowledge of what will be learned, that is, he must already perceive it as a “thing,” as something present-at-hand, at least partially. Learning is nonetheless more than the mere reception of a teaching, and the student is not an empty vessel into which a world is poured in. What is to be learned when one is taught a new language is not the nature of a language, that is, how the house is built and why, but rather a way to appropriate the house, to be able to dwell in it, and to make the new language and its new world parts of oneself. In order for this to happen,

⁶⁸ Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Cours de linguistique générale*. Lausanne: Payot, 1985: 163. Print.

the learner must cease to behold the house as a “thing,” seen as partially present-at-hand, and he must start to become one with it, making it ready-to-hand. Such a transition requires that he who learns also take an active role in supporting the house. He must stop to be a passive beholder, and must begin to be part of the community of men who support the house with their hands, safe-keeping it in their memory and building it further by expressing themselves inside it. It is only when he expresses himself, when he communicates with other dwellers, that he begins to become a dweller of the house, and to make it his.

Doing so, man will nonetheless often be under the impression that he merely acquired a new tool, a new language that he can use as he pleases, and that he can even shape according to his will. By beginning to dwell in a new house, the student nevertheless also becomes its “tool,” as the house is not simply an earthly dwelling, but rather a house of being. Man’s new abode is not only giving him a supplementary capacity to express himself, it changes his own being. This nonetheless occurs very progressively and surreptitiously, as the learner, little by little, sign by sign, makes the new house his home.

We have seen that for Hölderlin, a home is “where the blossoming paths are known to me,”⁶⁹ where “everything seems familiar; even people passing by greet each other as if they were Friends, and every face appears like kin.”⁷⁰ The learner has completed his task when he dwells in the new house in such a manner; when it has become familiar and a “natural” environment for him. When he owns and lets himself be owned by a house, he will see the truth of the words of the poet: “what you seek, it is near, already comes to meet you.”⁷¹ The readiness-to-hand of the house throws the new dweller into a strange world, but one that is now *his*, and that he will now contribute to build.

⁶⁹ Heidegger, Martin. *Elucidations of Hölderlin’s Poetry*. Amherst, N.Y: Humanity Books, 2000: 33. Print; Original German: “Heimzugehn, wo bekannt blühende Wege mir sind.” From: GA 4:15.

⁷⁰ Hölderlin, Friedrich. *Poems of Friedrich Hölderlin: The Fire of the Gods Drives Us to Set Forth by Day and by Night*. San Francisco: Ithuriel’s Spear, 2004: 29. Print.

⁷¹ Heidegger, Martin. *Elucidations of Hölderlin’s Poetry*. Amherst, N.Y: Humanity Books, 2000: 27. Print; Original German: “Was du suchest, es ist nahe, begegnet dir schon.” From: GA 4:10.

As the first quote reminds us, however, what defines a home is not only one's relationship with a dwelling. It is also defined by a relationship with a community of dwellers. All the men inside the home share a deep connection, as their own being is intertwined with the being of the others, through the bond formed by language. The home is a major component of their identity, as a people sharing a dwelling and a world. In its midst, they are all "like kin." The poet nonetheless also described the home as "the land of your birth, the soil of your homeland."⁷² Would this imply that one's home would therefore only be his first dwelling, his native tongue? No, if this birth is taken in a worldly sense rather than an earthly one.

Man's earthly birth always occurs outside of any house or home: he is born on the naked soil, outside of language. Only later in his infancy does he enter his first home. Man's coming to the earth is therefore not directly related to him having a home. It was seen in the first chapter that the fact that man is thrown into a world is what makes him a man, as a being that can be concerned with the question of the essence of being. The birth of man as man therefore is not his physical, earthly birth, but rather his appropriation of a home, which gives him a world. The journey away from the first home and the settling into a new house, when it is appropriated as ready-to-hand, is a change of home, and a change of world. As a change of house of being, this journey is also **new birth**, as the traveler is thrown into a new world that he will shape, but that will also shape his own being. In the narrative of the book of Daniel, the young men brought to the court of Babylon are immediately given new Babylonian names upon their arrival, as a symbol of their new birth in the new world built by the sons of Aram.⁷³ The pagan names are intended to show them as new men, as Babylonians worshiping the deities associated with this culture and this language. They, of course, can and will resist the attempts to make them forget their devotion to the one Deity. In due time, their own being will nonetheless be affected by their new home, even though they will not abandon the worship of the "one true God."

Furthermore, a new home is also a new beginning, marked by

⁷² Ibid.^t: 27 ; Original German: "Freilich wohl! das Geburtsland ists, der Boden der Heimath." From: GA 4: 10.

⁷³ Dan 1:7.

the arrival of the brightful joy (*das/die Heitere*), mentioned earlier.⁷⁴ The brightful joy is here to be found in the unconcealment brought by the home, that is, the unveiling of a new world, within the present-at-hand “thing” that is the house, and the transformation of one’s being that comes with it. This brightful joy is nonetheless very transient, and it is dissipated as soon as the journey itself is forgotten, as man’s readiness-to-hand of the home leads him to become blind to its presence-at-hand, which was only perceived in a very limited manner prior to the settlement in the new home, but now completely fades away into oblivion.

Making the new house his new home, the new world becomes bright, but the house itself, its nature, is thereby plunged into darkness, into a *lethe*. The brightful joy comes as a flickering spark born from the friction of man’s feet treading on the threshold of his new home. It comes from the event of appropriation itself, but only lasts an instant. Man needs this brightful joy, and for more than an instant, if he wants to fulfill his destiny and be what he is meant to be. The lack of joy was precisely the reason why the captivity happens in the first place, as it was previously seen in our review of the narrative, and in particular in this quote from the book of Deuteronomy:

Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart [בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵבָב], by reason of the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and in want of all things; The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar ... *a nation whose language you do not understand* (Deu 28:47–49, emphasis added)

As will be seen, man’s relationship with this spark of brightful joy will be decisive for the success of this *ek-stasis*. The emergence is nonetheless only its beginning, and man will be given a chance to seize this spark of joy and to kindle it into a fire, so as to advance further on the path of thinking through this experience of transition between homes.

The departure from the home and the settling into the new house constitutes a trans-port of the vehicle to another stat-ion: a

⁷⁴ See § 4.2.1.

transition not only between different homes, but foremost between a worldview composed of a single house of being toward one which already is a village, two houses which are linked through man's journey and appropriation. When the exiles leave the Holy Land to enter Babylon, in the narrative, they, in the meta-narrative, leave a monolingual world and are thrown into a bilingual one. This change from a life of seclusion within a single home to a life in a plurality of houses and homes represents an *ek-static* event that can be compared to the *ek-stases* that were examined in the previous chapters.

The transition between houses, and the one between house and village, nonetheless also possess some specificities, unique to them. The emerging environment, in this case, first appears as outlying, that is, as a distant one rather than one that enfolds him. Man nevertheless progressively plunges himself into it, by learning the new language and appropriating the new house, thereby making the combination of the two houses, the village, an environment that enfolds him. Contrary to the previous transition between *stat-ions*, however, men are here given an active role to play in the emergence process itself. They are the ones who plunge themselves into the new environment, even though their exile from the home was divinely initiated. This being said, as for the previous *stat-ions*, what matters will be man's capacity to put them in tension rather their nature. Prior to presenting the choice that man will be given, the nature of the new *stat-ion* that appears following the completion of the emergence will now be examined.

5.2.4 Two homes, two laws, one path

The men who are subjected to the present *ek-stasis* have now made the new house a new home. They can experience the world of the sons of Aram as their own. They can receive the knowledge gathered in it by all its dwellers and contribute to the further edification of this house of being. Dwelling in a new home nonetheless does not, in this case, imply that they have abandoned their first shelter. Learning a second language does not imply leaving behind one's mother tongue, and the *ek-stasis* exemplified by the Babylonian captivity is thus more than a transition between different homes.

The transition itself gives man a glimpse of the brightful joy, but it would be vain without the heart of this *ek-stasis*: man's thrownness into a new, bilingual environment. Forcefully taken out from his seclusion within his home, he now has been given sight of the entryway to the village. The path between his two homes remains unhindered, and he can travel freely between them. He can enjoy two different worlds opened up by his two homes. As a world offers man a way to perceive the Φύσις according to a meta-physics, the exiled men can now perceive the universe according to two different points of view: from two different worlds, and two metaphysics. By "code-switching," that is, using a linguistic gestalt switch, they can go from home to home effortlessly, able to enjoy both in their readiness-to-hand.

Each home, however, is a house of being, where a man is born, or reborn when he made it *his*. Does it mean that having multiple homes implies having multiple selves? As each home possesses its own meta-physical architecture, which organizes the Φύσις into "things" and establishes hierarchies between them, and as each one of these metaphysics may contradict another,⁷⁵ this implies that even though man's *ego* remains one, his world is now composed of worlds. Man's individual language pool is not only enlarged by the learning of the new language, it is also split in two, as the new idiom may include a metaphysics or an embedded knowledge incommensurable with the first, with contradictions between the two necessitating their isolation so as to preserve their coherence. A house indeed cannot stand without a ground, and meta-physical contradictions or other incommensurabilities could thus shake the house's foundation and make it crumble. The houses therefore remain separate entities, and the worldview of someone who dwells in different homes thus is compartmented. But this does not mean that each world remains completely isolated from the others, as

⁷⁵ The association between colors and other elements of the house of being can illustrate the notion that contradictions can arise when cultures come in contact. In European cultures, for example, the color white has for a long period been associated with the meta-physical concepts of "purity." In Chinese culture, however, the same color is often seen as linked with the idea of "death," leading to some awkwardness when Catholic missionaries used a plain white tablecloth on the altar during the celebration of the Eucharist. In order to avoid such situations, a cream-colored cloth is thus now often used. In this case, the contradiction is resolved by avoiding forcing the foreign values into the new home.

we will see that man has to take a stand regarding his relationship with the two homes.

The appearance of a second house nonetheless does not come alone. It is also accompanied by a gift, a second revelation, a second Law, which is placated on the walls of the new house. As the Israelites make the house of Aram their home, a new revelation from the Deity is poured into it: the Aramaic sections of the Scriptures themselves, which from now on will be part of the written revelation, like the Pentateuch and the historical books forming the first parts of the Bible. The annunciation of the captivity, the story of the redemption of Nabuchodonosor, and the prophecy of Daniel are now all part of God's message to man, part of the way the Deity uses languages to guide men on their path toward the appropriation of their essential being. The previous parts of the Scriptures were all revealed within the house of Adam, and thus only accessible to the Hebrews, who alone remained in it as the custodians of the Adamic heritage. With the captivity, this linguistic and ethnic seclusion is brought to an end. A new revelation takes place within a new house, and the dwellers of the house of Aram can partake in this divine gift. As this language is the *lingua franca* of the Babylonian empire, the new law is addressed to a large number of different peoples: not only to the Babylonians,⁷⁶ and not only to the exiled Hebrews. The house of Aram serves as a meeting point between the dwellers of the other houses in its vicinity. What does it change for the men of the biblical universe, and their being, which is the subject of the present investigation?

It was seen that revealed laws are an instrument through which the Deity uses language to guide men on the path of thinking, toward the appropriation of their essential being. One of the first immediate consequences of the repartition of the Law across two different houses is that from now on, no one, no people nor any individual, will be able to claim the Law as being exclusively one's own, as a birthright inherited from their forefathers and addressed exclusively to their people. In order to make the entirety of the Law one's own, one will now have to work for it, and *learn*, so as

⁷⁶ The Babylonians originally did not dwell in the house of Aram, but rather the one of Akkad. Akkadian is the original language of the Babylonian people, but this fact is not mentioned in the narrative, and it is only the fruit of modern historical scholarship.

to appropriate at least one new house.⁷⁷ As a guide onto the path of thinking, the plurilocation of the Law also implies that the path is now forked. One indeed needs to dwell in every house hosting a part of the law in order to see the different parts of the path, as seeing them is a privilege only offered to the inhabitants of these houses.

Translation could be used in order to attempt to transplant the Law of one house into another, but this will always remain a gross approximation, as the message is irremediably tied to a particular house, and its architecture. Even with an unlimited number of explanations and commentaries, a translation will always differ from an original, and furthermore, the narrative at this point does not even mention this possibility, which will only appear at a later point. For now, the possibility of translation of the Law is never mentioned:⁷⁸ each part of it remains confined to the premises of one particular house of being.

Only those who have learned to make the new house their home can therefore perceive its fullness, a privilege that is nonetheless not restricted to the Hebrew captives. Indeed, as mentioned in the narrative, the three emissaries sent to announce the captivity to the Hebrews already had learned the language of Adam.⁷⁹ The Israelites remaining in Judea will nonetheless not have access to the new part of the Law, at least for a time. This marks a turning point in mankind's relation to the path of thinking: the Hebrews will now need the Gentiles and one of their houses in order to see the revealed Law, and the Gentiles are also now directly invited to come back to the path left by their forefathers, through the written Law. This is one of the important consequences of the plurilocality of the Law and the forking of the path. Each people will now need other peoples in order to continue their journey on

⁷⁷ Some can nonetheless be considered exempt from this need to appropriate the foreign in order to appropriate the Law: native bilingual people, who have been given two different homes from an early age.

⁷⁸ A mention of translations can be found in the prologue of the book of the "Wisdom of Sirach," part of the Deuterocanonical books of the Catholic and Orthodox canons, but rejected by mainstream Protestant denominations, notably because it is itself only preserved in a Greek translation. The prologue itself constitutes a meta-textual note concerning the interpretation of the narrative, and its translation. It can therefore hardly be seen as part of the narrative itself.

⁷⁹ 2 Ki 18:26.

the path of thinking, which may one day lead them to the appropriation of their essential being. They will need their teaching, their hospitality; need to become guests within their house, as well as their tradition, built into the walls of their abode. Without col-laboration, without a helping hand, they will not be able to continue their wandering in search of their essential being.

The changing nature of the Law and its plurilinguality therefore do not represent a mere avoidance of translation, which would find its origin in a concern for linguistic exactitude or convenience. It occurs because it is in itself a key element for man's walk on the path toward his destiny. By changing man's relationship with language, and his relationship with the Law, the Deity thereby profoundly affects his life as a whole, such as his relationships with other peoples. This change of stat-ion has repercussions reaching beyond language itself. It is the groundwork clearing the path. Man is nonetheless not forcibly taken on this path like he was taken to Babylon. The Deity clears the way, but man must take the first step by himself.

5.2.5 Unconcealment: Homecoming

By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our lyres. For there our captors required of us songs, and our tormentors, mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" How shall we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest **joy!** (Psa 137⁸⁰)

The new stat-ion of the meta-narrative, man's appropriation

⁸⁰ "עַל נְהָרוֹת בָּבֶל שָׁם יִשְׁבּוּנוּ גַם-בְּכִינוּ בְּזָכְרֵנוּ אֶת-צִיּוֹן: עַל-עֲרֻבִים בְּחוֹכָהּ תִּלְיִנוּ בְּנִרוֹתֵינוּ: כִּי שָׁם שְׁאַלּוּנוּ שׁוֹבֵינֵנוּ דְבַר-יְשׁוּעָה וְתוֹלְלֵינוּ שְׁמִיחָה שִׁירוּ לָנוּ מִשִּׁיר צִיּוֹן: אִיךָ נִשִּׁיר אֶת-שִׁיר-יְהוָה עַל אֲדָמַת נָכָר: אִם-אֲשַׁכַּח יְרוּשָׁלַם תִּשְׁכַּח יְמִינִי: תִּדְבַּק-לְשׁוֹנִי לְחִכִּי אִם-לֹא אֲזַכְּרֶכִי אִם-לֹא אֶעֱלֶה אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַם עַל רֹאשׁ שְׁמִיחָתִי: זָכֹר יְהוָה לְבִנִי אֲדוֹם אֵת יוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם הָאֲמָרִים עָרוּ עָרוּ עַד הִסּוֹד בָּהּ: בֵּית-בָּבֶל הִשְׁדִּיחָה אֲשֶׁרִי שִׁשְׁלִם-לָהּ אֶת-נְמוּלָהּ שְׁנִמְלֵת לָנוּ: אֲשֶׁרִי שִׁיאֲחֻז וְנִפְץ אֶת-עַלְלִיךָ: אֶל-הַסֵּלַע" (Psa 137).

of a new home and of his capacity to travel between houses, is unfolded by the Babylonian captivity of the narrative. This event occurs as the consequence of another, one remote in time but nevertheless close in space: the confusion of tongues at Babel, when the village of being arose; when the world-tree sprouted from the earth. The tradition started by God and Adam flowed between earth and skies as a single stream, until then, and after this event it split into dozens of brooks, each watering a different part of the land. This separation may appear to not have profoundly affected the men caught in the flow of tradition, as each one of them remained caught in a single stream, oblivious to the existence of the others. The purpose of this separation will ultimately be revealed when the streams will have reached their destination. With the captivity, the exiles are taken away from the banks of the Jordan and made to dwell in the space between new streams, in Beth Nahrain (ܒܝܬ ܢܗܪܝܢ, the Aramaic word for Mesopotamia), literally the “house [between] the two **rivers**,” the Tigris and the Euphrates. The dwellings of men were always determined by the flow of the rivers, as they cannot live far from the fresh water that sustains their life. The flow of tradition is just as indispensable as water to them, as no house of being can stand without it: all that they build must be close to the stream that has flowed from the time of Adam.

The stream originates from the heavens, but it also permeates the earth, even going through man’s very core. Hölderlin, whose poetry shows a deep awareness of the dual nature of the river, as earthly and worldly, tells us that “... Not in vain do / Rivers run in the dry. Yet how? Namely, they are / To be to language. A sign is needed.”⁸¹ To “run in the dry” is in the river’s nature, but what does it mean? Rivers allow man to inhabit new corners of the earth, by making them fertile, by watering the soil from which man can build a house. Rivers are the source of the houses, but they are themselves also brought into the dwellings. The flow of tradition only appears to man through language, within a house. The house needs the river to be built, but the river needs the house in order to be seen and fulfill its purpose, which is to sustain and guide

⁸¹ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin’s Hymn “The Ister.”* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996: 26. Print; Original German: “. . . Umsonst nicht gehn / Im Troken die Strome. Aber wie? Sie sollen nemlich / Zur Sprache seyn. Ein Zeichen braucht es. . . .” From: GA 53: 30.

men, leading them to where the stream is going, its destination.

Babel is an important event, where the unique Adamic source was superseded by a multiplicity of streams, each taking a part of mankind to a different part of the earth, and watering different houses. During the period between the building of tower of Babel and the captivity, each stream ran to the dry earth, causing new dwellings to sprout from it. Each one of them grew and developed a specific architecture, a specific culture. The isolation of the houses also led to changes in their population: bodily specificities even began to appear, something made possible by the separation of the dwellings. This marked the birth of *peoples*, as ethnic and linguistic groups. Without any temporal and spatial separation, all would soon merge again and become one, and this could be one of the reasons explaining why the confusion of tongues precedes the captivity by a significant amount of time. The richness of these specificities nonetheless would be vain if each people forever remained oblivious to the others, as they would all stay unaware of what makes them different from other peoples.

The exile then breaks the isolation of the different traditions, by giving men a new experience, one where they are trans-planted from one house to another, one originating from a different stream. Even when this trans-plantation is complete, it nevertheless does not cut them off from their first home. They indeed can now journey between their two homes, their two languages, which are parts of the village of tongues. They can switch between languages, at will, and therefore change the house of being that is ready-to-hand to them. They can live by the banks of two very different rivers, two traditions associated with two peoples, but does it really change their life and their own being? Not necessarily, as it will later be seen, but both the event of Babel and the captivity point toward this moment, when man is given the opportunity to dwell in multiple homes. Man can dwell in a home, and he can even possess it, without clearly seeing the nature of this home and the nature of the homely. Heidegger told that “what is properly one’s own and appropriating it is what is most difficult. Yet learning what is foreign, as standing in the service of such appropriation, is easier for precisely this reason.”⁸² Here may one of the main

⁸² Ibid.^t: 124; Original German: “Das Eigene und seine Aneignung ist das Schwerste. Das Lernen des Fremden aber, das im Dienste dieser Aneignung steht, ist eben deshalb leichter.” From: GA 53:154.

purposes of this *ek-stasis* be discovered: the fact that the journey away from the home is necessary to the man who wants to reveal both the nature of his home and the nature of homeliness itself.

The journey in itself is nonetheless of limited value. The exiles left their ancestral home in order to make a new house, located by a new river, their new home. It was previously seen that the journey away from home brings a form of unconcealment, during the brief instant when the present-at-hand house becomes a ready-to-hand home. This spark of joy nonetheless quickly fades away, and man's new home becomes similar to the first. If man leaves his home only to find another and then periodically wander between the two similar dwellings, his relation to what his homes *are* is not significantly changed. Anyone who has learned to appropriate a new home will be able to dwell in the village, but only a few will be able to see the true meaning of this event and be able to seize the gift it offers, a gift that goes beyond a mere capacity to transit between different houses of being.

As for the previous *ek-stases*, men are here given a choice. They are given an opportunity either to leap between stat-ions, or to bridge them. They can decide to either progress on the path of thinking or to stay still, standing where they are. First, the case of the one who leaps, and fails to seize this opportunity, will be examined.

5.2.5.1 Leap between house, leap between stat-ions

*Tėvynės dainos, jūs auksinės,
Be jūsų šąla mums krūtinės!*

Songs from the homeland,
you made of gold,
Without you, our chest is [so]
cold!

— Maironis ⁸³

One of the peculiarities of the present *ek-stasis* is the different ways in which man can fail to accept the gift it offers. First, man can leap between houses. He can become at-home within the

⁸³ TBA. Maironis. "Pavasario balsai." *Lietuvių klasikinės literatūros antologija*. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.

new dwelling after having learned to appropriate it, and he can then completely forget about his original home. This is the most extreme way in which one can miss the purpose of this *ek-stasis*. The men weeping by the rivers of Babylon would seem well aware of the gravity of this choice: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you" (Psa 137:5). If one forgets the ancestral home, then the whole journey away from it and the experience of appropriation of the new home are thus in vain. One home replaces another, and man sees the Φύσις from a new house and from the prism of a new architecture, but having no other point of reference, he then once again is put under the spell of a *lethe*. He has momentarily left one home and was given sight of the fact that *the* world is broader than *his* world. He also received the spark of brightful joy which appeared during the appropriation of a new home, but he chose to stand still on the path of thinking, tempted by the tranquility and confidence provided by the readiness-to-hand of the home, which leaves no place to doubt one's vision of the Φύσις or to examine the nature of the ground upon which one's home is built. The skleronoia remains, and man believes that he possesses a direct perception of the continuous Φύσις, and believes that his world corresponds to the reality of the Φύσις itself. Such a man has been sent on a journey to colonize a new part of the earth and discover a new world, but cut off from the motherland, and having even forgotten its existence, he is not a colon nor a pioneer, but only an exilee.

One of Hölderlin's verses says that "colony, and bold forgetting spirit loves."⁸⁴ Heidegger thus explains the meaning of the "colony": "this does not mean whatever is merely foreign in the sense of the alien and exotic, that which the adventurer sets out in search of in order to settle his conscience . . . 'Colony' is always the land of the daughter that is related and drawn back to the motherland."⁸⁵ A colon is indeed defined by his link with his original home, and the journey away from home only becomes

⁸⁴ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister."* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996: 131. Print; Original German: "Kolonie liebt, und tapfer Vergessen der Geist." From: GA 53: 164.

⁸⁵ Ibid.^t: 131; Original German: "»Kolonie« — das ist nicht das bloße Fremde des Fremdartigen und Exotischen, das der Abenteurer zu seinem betäubenden Gewissen aufsucht. . . »Kolonie« ist stets das auf das Mutterland zurückbezogene Tochterland." From: GA 53: 164.

meaningful if one returns to it, and establishes contact between old and new worlds. To break away from the original home, one must boldly abandon and forget it. No learning and appropriation of another house can take place if one refuses to leave the homeland, turning his head away from it, as its sight would always overcome his longing for the foreign, his *Fernweh*. The brightful joy can only appear through this concealment of the home. The forgetfulness of the colon must nonetheless remain temporary. He must be able to find his way back home, otherwise he will not be able to fulfill the purpose of the colony, which is to enlarge the dominion of the homeland and to broaden the horizon of the homeworld.

The complete forgetfulness of the original home is only an extreme case. Most learners of a second language indeed do not completely forget their mother tongue, but this nonetheless does not in any way guarantee a greater success in seizing the opportunities offered by the *ek-stasis*. The previous chapters have shown that the *ek-stases* unconceal through a tension between contrasting elements. This was illustrated by Heidegger's interpretation of Heraclitus' 51st fragment:

... whatever is by itself at variance is nevertheless in agreement with itself; *counter-striving harmony it is, as with the bow and the lyre*' [where the ends that stretch apart are tensed together, a tension which, however, first makes possible precisely the release of the arrow and the resonance of the strings, that is: *beyng*]⁸⁶

In the case the *ek-stases* of the meta-narrative, the unconcealment of a part of the path of thinking and of the nature of the Φύσις is what the plucking produces, instead of *beyng*. The dynamic at play is nonetheless the same. The men who have made the house of Aram their home may remember their homeland, but they may still fail to place the two in a productive tension, as the exiles of the psalm: "by the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and

⁸⁶ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine."* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014: 111. Print. (Emphasis added); Original German: "»Nicht verstehen sie [nämlich die alltäglich so in ihrem Dasein Dahintreibenden], daß und wie jenes, was für sich auseinandersteht, doch in sich übereinkommt; gegenstrebiger Einklang ist das, wie beim Bogen und der Leier« [wo die auseinanderstrebenden Enden zusammengespannt sind, welche Spannung aber gerade den Abschluß des Pfeils und den Klang der Saiten erst ermöglicht, das heißt: das Seyn]." From: GA 39: 124.

wept, when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our lyres" (Psa 137:1). Hopping between houses, switching between languages, these men do not establish any tension between them. Therefore, no plucking can occur, and no sound is produced. The remembrance of their homeland and their ability to dwell in two homes do not fundamentally change their relation to language itself, as each home remains isolated from the others: the village is seen as a set of separate houses instead of a community, and the result of the *ek-stasis* is quite similar to the one of the men having forgotten their homeland.



Fig. 15 *By the river*. Watching the flow of the river, the traveler is reminded of his homeland. No matter where he now is on the earth, the waters are familiar, and all have the same destination: the great sea. His homesickness is soothed when he sees that the ocean is more than a common destination of all rivers, and that it is also their source, with the light of the sun initiating their never-ending movement.

The primary leap can occur during the Babylon event, when the men of the narrative are taught the language of the empire. The significance of this event nevertheless does not lie in the dwellings themselves, but rather in the fact that it marks the transition from a seclusion within a home to the appropriation of a village, or, in technical language, a transition from monolingualism to plurilingualism. To leap between stations here means that one sees and recognizes the plurilingual nature of the biblical universe,

but that one either chooses to ignore the plurality of the houses composing the village, or simply fails to put the two stat-ions in tension. To refrain from linking the monolingual stat-ion with the plurilingual home, the life in a hermit's home and the one in the larger village, is to miss the main purpose of the ek-stastic event induced by the Babylonian captivity of the narrative. As it will now be seen, man is nonetheless given many occasions to avoid this series of leaps, so that the true meaning of this event can be unveiled, allowing man to walk further on the path set in front of him.

5.2.5.2 Bridging: throwing lines, building a bridge

Peaks of silver shine silently above,
 And the sparkling snow is full of roses.
 Still higher above the light lives the god, pure
 And holy, pleased with the divine play of light beams.
 He lives there quietly and alone: his face is bright.

 I had much to say to him, for whatever poets think
 Or sing about is addressed mainly to him and his an-
 gels.
 I asked him for much, out of love to the Fatherland,
 So the Spirit wouldn't suddenly fall upon us unbidden.
 I prayed much for you too, my landspeople, who have
 cares
 Inside the Fatherland: to whom holy gratitude, smil-
 ing, brings back the exiles.

— Hölderlin, *Homecoming*⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Hölderlin, Friedrich. *Poems of Friedrich Hölderlin: The Fire of the Gods Drives Us to Set Forth by Day and by Night*. San Francisco: Ithuriel's Spear, 2004: 28–29. Print. (abridged); German original: “Ruhig glänzen indess die silbernen Höhen darüber, / Voll mit Rosen ist schon droben der leuchtende Schnee. / Und noch höher hinauf wohnt über dem Lichte der reine / Seelige Gott vom Spiel heiliger Stralen erfreut. / Stille wohnt er allein, und hell erscheint sein Antlitz, . . . Vieles sprach ich zu ihm, denn, was auch Dichtende sinnen / Oder singen, es gilt meistens den Engeln und ihm; / Vieles bat ich, zu lieb dem Vaterlande, damit nicht / Ungebeten uns einst plötzlich befele der Geist; / Vieles für euch auch, die im Vaterlande besorgt sind, / Denen der heilige Dank lächelnd die Flüchtlinge bringt.” From: GA 4: 9–10.

These verses could have been uttered on the riverbanks near Babylon, as they express the quintessence of the *ek-stasis* induced in the meta-narrative by the captivity of the Hebrew nobility in the narrative. This event is foremost part of a dialogue between the Deity and its creation. It also represents a dialogue between man and his homeland, and man and his people. The divine brightness gives man joy and it illuminates his path. Man must nonetheless also create in order to partake of the divine brilliance. He must throw lines between ridges and build bridges to expand the path and continue his journey. This requires that man take a stand and choose to bridge the stat-ions, rather than to leap between them.

The unconcealment brought by the bridging of the stat-ions of this particular *ek-stasis*, whose preparation started at Babel, is manifold. Its unveiling is perhaps more delicate than the other cases that were previously examined. This unconcealment is indeed unfolded and given to man to behold as a cascading event, requiring multiple decisions. The task may be harder for man to complete, but the reward will fit the effort that it demands. The Deity nonetheless does not put stumbling blocks in his path unnecessarily, and the starting point of this event certainly represents the easiest way to clear the path that awaits him. The German philosopher also conveyed the epitome of this event in these words inspired by the rivers of his homeland and the poems of Hölderlin, that has already been quoted several times: “what is properly one’s own, and appropriating it, is what is most difficult. Yet learning what is foreign, as standing in the service of such appropriation, is easier for precisely this reason.”⁸⁸ The emergence described in the previous section is one of such learnings of the foreign. What was learned was not something random or insignificant: it was a house of being, a home, the heart of man’s being, which is both the source of his humanity and the vessel in which this humanity can be manifested.

More than this, the journey away from home and the learning of the foreign is only the beginning of a larger exploration triggered by the captivity, one which will lead man to appropriate not only his home, but the nature of “nationhood” as well, that is,

⁸⁸ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin’s Hymn “The Ister.”* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996: 124. Print; Original German: “Das Eigene und seine Aneignung ist das Schwerste. Das Lernen des Fremden aber, das im Dienste dieser Aneignung steht, ist eben deshalb leichter.” From: GA 53: 154.

the nature of the peoples dwelling in particular homes and what differentiates them from the other peoples that emerged following the confusion of tongues. Perhaps more importantly, the journey away from the home is also meant to unconceal man's homeliness itself, the meta-physical facticity that shapes the way he perceives the universe. This manifold unconcealment comes as a cascade, with subsequent steps only accessible to one who has unveiled the preceding one. These steps will be unfolded one by one, starting from the beginning, at the threshold.

5.2.5.2.1 Threshold line.

The first opportunity for man to witness an unconcealment actually occurs before the completion of the emergence, before the new house has become a new home. In a previous chapter, we have seen that man could perceive the presence-at-hand of the outer parts of his house through an encounter with other houses. These other dwellings were nonetheless never learned, never entered by him, and therefore the only tension that could be produced was between the intelligible and the un-intelligible. It was as if man was peering through a window inside his home, seeing the village outside without leaving his life of seclusion within his house. This tension is important, revealing a key part of the essence of language to man, but now, man has been put in a position where he can step outside and enter another house, where he can learn a new language and appropriate a new home. While he learns, man is journeying away from his home, leaving the dwelling built by the river which has sustained the life and world of his people in order to visit another house, built on the bank of another stream, and inhabited by another people.

What he encounters now is not the unintelligible, but rather the un-homely, that is, the inside of a dwelling, which is recognized as such and which progressively becomes intelligible, but has yet to become a home to him. As Heidegger remarks: "that which is un-homely is not merely the non-homely, but rather that homely that seeks yet does not find itself, because it seeks itself by way or a distancing and alienation [Entfernung und Entfremdung] from itself."⁸⁹ The other house is not just something that is not his

⁸⁹ Ibid.^t: 84 (Original in brackets added); Original German: "Das Un-

home. It is something that is in its essence a home, but denies this essence to the newcomer. The un-home thus is the un-essence of the home rather than simply that which is not a home, and the encounter with the un-essence is an invitation to perceive the true nature of the essence itself.

The dichotomy between the home and the un-home also possesses another dimension. It was indeed shown in a previous section (§ 5.2.1) that the home is also linked with the poetic. The dichotomy can therefore also be seen as an encounter between the poetic and its un-essence, the un-poetic, which represents the denial of its essence. The home is a poetic house in the sense that its dweller has a ready-to-hand relation to it. He can pour out his will and express himself with the sign-blocks composing it, naturally, with almost no impediment or necessity to think about language itself. The un-poetic house is nonetheless different. It is not simply non-poetic, something that could not receive the outpour of man's creativity. It is indeed a poetic house for its dwellers, but the poetic nature of this house is denied to the guest, that is, to someone who has yet to make this dwelling his home.

Through this encounter between home and un-home, poetic and un-poetic, man is thus called to cease to simply be *at-home* in his house(s) of being in order to become *homely* in it, and to perceive its *homeliness*, its poetic nature. This can nonetheless only be achieved by being un-homely first:

The Law of being homely as a becoming homely consists in the fact that historical human beings, at the beginning of their history, are not intimate with what is homely, and indeed must even become unhomely with respect to the latter in order to learn the proper appropriation of what is their own in venturing to the foreign, and to first become homely in the return from the foreign⁹⁰

heimische ist aber nicht bloß das Nicht-heimische, sondern jenes Heimische, das sich selbst sucht, aber nicht findet, weil es sich sucht auf dem Wege der Entfernung und Entfremdung von sich selbst." From: GA 53: 103.

⁹⁰ Ibid.^t: 125; Original German: "Das Gesetz des Heimischseins als eines Heimischwerdens besteht darin, daß der geschichtliche Mensch im Beginn seiner Geschichte nicht im Heimischen vertraut ist, ja sogar unheimisch zu diesem werden muß, um in der Ausfahrt zum Fremden von diesem die Aneignung des Eigenen zu lernen und erst in der Rückkehr aus ihm heimisch zu werden."

The learning of the foreign induces the throwing of a line between the two houses, connecting them and putting them in a limited tension with each other, but nonetheless not allowing any direct ex-changes between the two. This first line that is thrown by man to link the two houses thus initiates a tension between the home and the un-home, between homeliness and un-homeliness.

The man who starts his journey away from home is, from the beginning, only *at-home* in it. He has yet to see its homeliness and be *homely* with it. To be *at-home* is to have a ready-to-hand relationship with a house of being. In contrast, to be *homely* with it is to combine readiness-to-hand and true presence-at-hand, that is, to be able to both dwell in the house and to perceive its true essence. Being *homely* thus is to fully appropriate a dwelling, including the perception of its effect on oneself. It is necessary for man to start by being simply *at-home* in his house, as to be homely requires an active appropriation, which is only possible from outside the home, from the foreign land, and it is not something that can be given as a gift from infancy:

In spirit there thus prevails the longing for its own essence. Therefore, for the sake of its essence and in obedience to the appropriation of what is its own, spirit must, precisely in the beginning, 'at the commencement,' never be 'at home,' that is, never be homely. Spirit is essentially unhomely only when, for the sake of what is its own, from out of the will for its essence, it wills the unhomely, the foreign. Thus Hölderlin says:
... Colony, and bold forgetting spirit loves.⁹¹

Venturing outside his homeland to find a new home, man is looking for a land that would be fit for the creation of a colony. As said earlier, it is necessary for him to turn his back on his homeland, and even to forget it to a certain extent, if he wants to appropriate a new home. Such a forgetting can be permanent, but no tension

From: GA 53: 156.

⁹¹ Ibid.^t: 131; Original German: "Im Geist waltet daher die Sehnsucht zu seinem eigenen Wesen. Also muß der Geist um seines Wesens willen und im Gehorsam zur Aneignung seines Eigenen gerade im Beginn, »im Anfang«, nie »zu Hauß«, d. h. nie heimisch sein. Der Geist ist nur dann wesentlich unheimisch, wenn er um des Eigenen willen, aus dem Willen seines Wesens, das Unheimische, das Fremde will. Deshalb sagt Hölderlin: Kolonie liebt, und tapfer Vergessen der Geist." From: GA 53: 163–164.

can occur in this case: man then performs a vain leap between homes. Here, an echo to the words of the exiles sitting by the rivers of Babylon can be found once again: “If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you” (Psa 137:5–6). As they arrive in the realm of their conquerors, which has yet to become their new home, they must be able to remember their homeland, otherwise, they would have no dwelling, no house of being in which they could express themselves and simply *be*. They would have no tongue, and they would therefore not be fully masters of their bodies. Without language, they would be as wild beasts rather than ζῷον λόγον ἔχον, animals endowed with reason, with language.

To see how man can become homely, rather than simply at-home, nonetheless requires more than a contrast between home and un-home. Indeed, more than the home and its un-essence, it is through the examination of man’s relation to both that the unconcealment resulting from the tension can become manifest. Man’s relation to a home is a *dwelling*, while his relation to the un-home is a *journeying*. The first implies a *locale*, and the second a *movement*. The German master remarks that “locale is a spatial determination. Journey, movement, takes its course in time.”⁹² This is meant to signal that the unity of space and time is paralleled by a continuum between dwelling and journeying: both are one. In order to see how this relates to man’s relationship with language, one must first look at the home’s origin, which is the river: “The river ‘is’ the locality that pervades the abode of human beings upon the earth, determines them to where they belong and where they are homely [*heimisch*]. The river thus brings human beings into their own and maintains them in what is their own.”⁹³ The river is what determined the home’s location. It flows from the origin and accompanies man. Different peoples thus live by different streams, and this is the source of their specificities. Their abode is strongly tied to the river on which they depend, and it is therefore also tied to a particular location.

⁹² Ibid.^t: 43; Original German: “Ort ist eine Bestimmung des Raumes. Wanderung, Bewegung ist Ablauf in der Zeit.” From: GA 53: 52–53.

⁹³ Ibid.^t: 21; Original German: “Der Strom »ist« die Ortschaft, die den Aufenthalt des Menschen auf der Erde durchwaltet, ihn dahin bestimmt, wohin er gehört und wo er heimisch ist. Der Strom bringt so den Menschen ins Eigene und behält ihn im Eigenen.” From: GA 53: 23.

To dwell in a house and to be at-home is to be *here*. On the other hand, to be *journeying* is to cease to be *here*, and instead to go *there*, to stop dwelling and being at rest within the home, to venture outside of it. In the present context, the journeying is nonetheless more than a mere visit to a desert: to make a journey rather means to enter and to start to dis-cover another abode. The journeying is thus an attempt to dwell in another house, and to make it another home. With this in mind, the link between dwelling as a location in space and journeying as a movement in time, mentioned by Heidegger, can be unveiled.

The philosopher indeed shows that *locale* and *journey* are in fact one, and that “if locality and journeying indeed belong together in such an originary manner as we have asserted, then the belonging together of space and time suggests itself as that which must thoroughly govern the unity of locale and journey.”⁹⁴ The unity of dwelling and journeying becomes clearer when it is put in relation with the present context, where the journeying represents the appropriation of another house of being. Both dwelling and journeying are a type of relationship with an abode. To dwell in a house, to be at-home, is to have a ready-to-hand relationship with the house. To be journeying, on the other hand, is to strive to appropriate a house in order to dwell in it, but for now only to perceive it in a limited form of presence-at-hand. While journeying and beholding the presence-at-hand of another house, man, is also given a chance to realize that his own home is quite similar to the one that he tries to appropriate now. It is built in another location, by another river, and it possesses a particular architecture, different from the original home. Both houses nonetheless share something in common: their nature as houses of being.

The view of the two houses may thus be conflated in order to allow us to peer into the essence of the house, of the home, and of the homely. Through this vision, man may become able to build a real bridge between the two houses, and then come home. This homecoming will itself be a journey, toward the home rather than away from it. Through this journey, man may finally become able to behold the presence-at-hand of his original home, something

⁹⁴ Ibid.^t: 43; Original German: “Wenn schon Ortschaft und Wanderschaft so ursprünglich zusammengehören, wie behauptet ist, dann bietet sich die Zusammengehörigkeit von Raum und Zeit als das an, was die Einheit von Ort und Wanderung durchherrschen muß.” From: GA 53: 53.

that he never did before, as he was under the spell of the *lethe* brought by the readiness-to-hand that is typical of the dweller.

Thus, as space and time are intricately intertwined, so is dwelling and journeying, because only he who has journeyed away from home and came back to it from the foreign may perceive the dual nature of his house of being, as both ready-to-hand and present-at-hand. The home is indeed the product of a present-at-hand earthly house with a worldly ready-to-hand counterpart. There can thus be no home without this union of the two dimensions of the house of being. The perception of this duality is the essence of being *homely*, as opposed to simply be *at-home*. It represents the full appropriation of a house, that is, a state when man is able to perceive its nature as he dwells in it, and is able to be conscious of the nature of his homeliness within the home, his linguistic facticity.

The dual nature of the house thus explains the need for the encounter with the foreign and the homecoming. To dwell in a house indeed implies staying in a location, and journeying implies a movement. Both cannot be simultaneous, so they must occur in succession, in time. The nature of the house may only be perceived through the duality of man's relationship with it: one needs to dwell in a house in order to perceive its readiness-to-hand, but one also needs the journeying to and fro in order to see its present-at-hand essence. As space and time, both are nonetheless still one, in the same manner that the home is linked to the river, which is itself the most striking manifestation of this "unity in duality." The river indeed determines the location of the home, but it is itself a continuous flow, from the origin onto its destination. The home's relation to the river implies that to dwell in it is not to stand still on the earth, but rather to be caught in the flow of a river. Dwelling is also a journeying, and one cannot dwell in the same home twice.

The journeying from the home, as the one experienced by the dwellers of the house of Adam, is therefore a secondary journey, a journey away from the journeying home. As dwelling is also partly a journeying, however, journeying also may be seen as a dwelling. To take the step of leaving the flow of one's home river to find another and to enter another house, learning to make it a new home, is always already a dwelling, as the learning and

appropriation are never fully completed. As Heraclitus said, one cannot step into the same river twice.⁹⁵ Indeed, as the home is itself by an ever-flowing river, it is always changing, and one always needs to learn and to appropriate it to remain at home in it. Both the dual nature of the home and the dual relation that man has with it, as home and un-home, dwelling and journeying, are thus reflected in the nature of the river: “the river is the locality of the dwelling of human beings as historical upon this earth. The river is the journeying of a historical coming to be at home at the locale of this locality. The river is locality and journeying.”⁹⁶ These are not vacuous statements, stating seemingly contradictory oppositions for the sake of confusing the reader. These words point out the intricacy of our relationship with our language(s), and they are also meant to make us realize that perhaps more attention should be paid to the river itself rather than to the dwelling or our relationship with it: “to dwell in what is one’s own is what comes last and is seldom successful and always remains what is most difficult. Yet if the river determines the locality of the homely, then it is of essential assistance in becoming homely [Heimischwerden] in what is one’s own.”⁹⁷ The line thrown between a home and an un-home, a dwelling and a journeying, reveals the dual nature of the home, but this unconcealment itself is also a key that allows man to begin to see the origin of his home, which comes from the river.

Man’s homecoming firstly makes him see his home for what it truly is, as something homely, but it also opens a door offering a sight of what lays beyond it, that is, the river that flows to and fro, from its origin onto its destination. The appropriation of the homeland is therefore one of the paths leading to the appropriation of man’s destiny: “The homeland is, as this appropriation, the destiny of being. The homeland is the historical *locus* of the truth

⁹⁵ “Ποταμοῖσι δις τοῖσι αὐτοῖσι οὐκ ἂν ἐμβαίης· ἕτερα γὰρ <καὶ ἕτερα> ἐπιρρέει ὕδατα.” From: Henderson, Jeffrey. “HERACLITUS, On the Universe.” *Loeb Classical Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Dec. 2016.

⁹⁶ Ibid.^t: 33; Original German: “Der Strom ist die Ortschaft des Wohnens des geschichtlichen Menschen auf dieser Erde. Der Strom ist die Wanderschaft des geschichtlichen Heimischwerdens am Ort der Ortschaft. Der Strom ist Ortschaft und Wanderschaft.” From: GA 53: 39.

⁹⁷ Ibid.^t: 21; Original German: “Im Eigenen zu wohnen ist dann aber jenes, was zuletzt kommt und selten glückt und stets am schwersten bleibt. Wenn aber der Strom die Ortschaft des Heimischen bestimmt, dann ist er eine wesentliche Hilfe für das Heimischwerden im Eigenen.” From: GA 53: 24.

of beyng, called and received from the earth, rooted in it and born in it.”⁹⁸ The way opened by the emergence of the foreign, however, does not end here.

5.2.5.2.2 A line between two worlds

The unconcealment of man’s homeliness is, without a doubt, one of the most important consequences of his venturing outside of his native home. This event is nonetheless just a preliminary step, paving the way for another, which will have an even more wide-ranging effect on man’s journey on the path of thinking, and his being in general. Indeed, the new stat-ion of language that appears with the Babylonian captivity does not simply represent man’s displacement, both physical and meta-physical, into another home. Houses of being each have their specificities, but they also share a common nature and are interchangeable. A mere switching of residence in itself would not constitute a new stat-ion. This being said, a new stat-ion indeed appears. Before this event, man indeed lived as a recluse within a single home, whereas he can now be at home in two different locations, two different buildings. More importantly, this implies that man’s world, and therefore his perception of the Φύσις, have been fundamentally transformed. His world is now made up of two different worlds, each one of them forming a particular way of looking at the oneness of the universe in which he is thrown.

In order to be able to perceive such a duality of representation of the Φύσις, man must first remember his original home after he appropriates the new one. Another step is the aforementioned homecoming, necessary for man to be fully homely, not only in his new home, but also in the first one. Then only can man begin to be homely in a village composed of two houses, each of which having a different architecture, a different way to re-present the Φύσις and to give it to man to behold. This new environment possesses the particularity of not being seen as a whole simultaneously. Man can indeed travel between his two homes and put them in tension. He

⁹⁸ TBA. Original German: “Heimat ist als diese Ereignung das Geschick des Seyns. Heimat ist die geschichtliche Ortschaft der Wahrheit des Seyns, gerufen und empfangen von der Erde, gewurzelt in sie und in sie geborgen.” From: GA 73.1: 755.

nonetheless cannot be in both at the same time, and he is not yet able to be the vector of ex-changes between them, something that will require a bridge rather than a mere line between houses, and that will only appear later in the meta-narrative.⁹⁹ The new home indeed does not constitute a mere extension of the old one. The two homes remain distinct and separate, and man must switch his attention to one of them in order to behold the world associated with each house. One can alternatively use different languages, but these languages will often need to be identifiable and distinguished one from the others so that each utterance can be linked with the world it arises from. Only then will confusion and misunderstandings be avoided. This means that like the tablets of the Law of Moses, which are two-sided and therefore cannot be seen at one glance in their entirety, man's exploration of his world requires a gestalt switch, which in the meta-narrative implies a walk back on the path opened by the first journey, which was the learning of the foreign.

The line gathers the houses, brings them closer, and yet, it also maintains them separate, at a distance. The new station induces a duality: the homes are becoming one entity thanks to the line, but it also helps to keep them distinct, thereby preserving their specificities. Unity in plurality is the key to man's new world following the breaking of his seclusion, a world of worlds, united and yet separate. This gathering of the separate nonetheless does not only mark a broadening of man's world. It does not simply add a plurality. It also and foremost sheds light on the specificities of each house. Brought close together, the difference between the homes can then appear. This difference is the set of all the peculiarities of their architectures, which act as the filtering lenses through which man perceives the universe. The learning of the foreign, the homecoming and the tension brought on by the line together can unconceal what makes each house of being different from any others: it unconceals the worldliness of the world opened by each abode.

The *ek-stasis* following the confusion of tongues offered the possibility for man to unconceal the houseness of the house, and man could thereby become aware of the nature of language. With

⁹⁹ Translation will become a means through which ex-changes between houses can occur. Translation, however, only appears in the narrative following the Pentecost, an event which will be recounted in the next chapter.

this previous *ek-stasis*, the house's architecture nonetheless remained veiled, as man had no contrasting element to his home. He could only identify the existence of other houses, and see their outward appearance, but unable to step outside his hermitage, what was contained in both his home and the other houses remained out of his sight. The inner part of a house, that is, what is concealed when it is seen from the outside, is a clearing, the opening of a space where a world can appear. During his secluded existence, man perceived the universe only through the prism of this unique world. The world reveals the Φύσις to man, but "the clearing in which beings stand is in itself at the same time concealment,"¹⁰⁰ the world unconceals the Φύσις but conceals itself, until man can step outside of it, and can behold the Φύσις from another point of view, from another world. This is precisely what the Babylonian captivity represents for the exiles of the narrative, that is, an *ek-stasis* from the world inherited from Adam, and a possibility to link it with the world of the sons of Aram. This event will affect more than a small group of Judean nobility. It will indeed be offered equally to mankind as a whole. Men will all, sooner or later, indeed have a chance to experience the journey to the foreign and the homecoming. All will be given an opportunity to link two homes and to dwell in the village, and when they will do so, putting the two houses in tension and bringing them in the same "neighborhood," the *lethe* of the worlds will then be broken, both worlds now unconcealed, and the worldliness of the worlds will finally appear.

The first *ek-stasis* brought the earth and the skies to a house of being, to *a* world, the one of Adam and all his descendants until the Babel episode. The second *ek-stasis*, the event of Babel, opened the possibility to bring the existence of the village, the 72 different houses, to 72 different worlds, that is, to give sight of the existence of the village to all peoples, even though the village still remained inaccessible to them. This event can give sight of the existence of the houses, but it does not, and the distinction is important, reveal the world that they shelter. At this point, man still lives in seclusion within a single house and a single world. What the Babel *ek-stasis* brings to his world is the outward appearance of

¹⁰⁰ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2001: 52. Print; Original German: "Die Lichtung, in die das Seiende hereinsteht, ist in sich zugleich Verbergung." From: GA 5: 40.

the house, but not the world it opens up and shelters. Man can become aware of the nature of his own dwelling and of the other, but only his home is intelligible, that is, he has only one world. The third *ek-stasis*, the advent of writing, can then reveal the temporal and historical dimensions of the universe and bring them to man's world. Finally, the present one, man's travel to the house of Aram, represents a scission of man's world. His life of seclusion comes to an end; another home is found and dwelt in. It could be seen as the bringing of different worlds to man's world, but this could mislead us to think that there could be a "meta-world" outside of any house of being, something that is impossible.

More important than the fact that through this event man can dwell in different worlds, however, is the fact that it marks the appearance of worldliness itself into man's horizon. A man who has only seen the universe through a single colored or distorting lens during all his life will not be able to distinguish the effect of this lens, and he will not realize the fact that the reality of what lies beyond his house of being is different than what he sees. This being said, if the same man is given to see the same landscape through two very different filtering lenses, and if he is allowed to switch at will between the two, the lenses and their effect on his perception of the universe can then be revealed to him. The Babylonian *ek-stasis* is very similar to such a situation, as the houses of being are the lenses through which man perceives the universe.

Living in seclusion within a single home, the house's architecture, its effect on his perception, and the effect it exerts on his thinking, all three remained unseen. By bridging two houses, he can now see the universe from the point of view of two different worlds, two different traditions, each of which provides a unique construction representing the $\Phi\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma\iota\varsigma$, a construction that has been built by generations of men, belonging to a specific people, who lived on the banks of a particular stream. The concomitance of these two worlds, brought closer by the line thrown between the houses, implies that man will soon be led to realize that the world that he inhabited before was only a distorted representation of something else: the $\Phi\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma\iota\varsigma$, whose direct experience lies beyond the reach of man's *logos*. Only through a world can he experience it, a world that breaks down its blinding oneness and continuity into a discontinuous intelligible structure.

The coexistence of multiple worlds witnessed by a single man can allow him to identify and to overcome the phenomenon that was earlier named skleronoia, which is a failure to distinguish a representation from what it represents, that is, to mistake the world for the Φύσις, language for the universe. Such a skleronoia can have a devastating effect on man's life, even leading him to think that his mastery of his house of being implies a mastery of the universe as a whole. It has been argued in the third chapter that this may have been the major sin of the Babelites, who made a tower reaching the sky to make a "name for themselves,"¹⁰¹ and it is no coincidence that the village finds its origin in this event.

The unconcealment of worldliness is the blossoming of a tree whose seed was planted long before the Babylonian captivity. One of the deepest meanings of the confusion of tongues and the scattering of the peoples is only revealed during this subsequent exile. With the confusion of tongues at Babel comes the sowing, and with the captivity to Babylon comes the reaping. The two events resonate one with the other, and both form the instruments through which peoples and "nationhood" arise. Such "nationhood" represents the specificities of each one of the 72 peoples populating the biblical land, what distinguishes them from the others. As the Lithuanian philosopher Antanas Maceina reminds us, peoples are not only a political or sociological entity gathering a group of individuals. They are also part of man's being, as an "organic community, as an individuality, linked by an internal bond, which gathers individuals together even when this people, as a united entity, does not appear to be so in [man's] social life."¹⁰² The bond that characterizes peoples is thus not necessarily apparent, and it cannot be severed by a mere worldly or earthly estrangement. The separation initiated at Babel was nonetheless not only linguistic or worldly. It also represented a physical separation, and one of kinship. It represented more than an estrangement. It represented the birth of dozens of peoples, which will now flow separately from

¹⁰¹ Gen 11:4: "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

¹⁰² TBA. Original Lithuanian: "Galima tautą imti kaip organišką bendruomenę, kaip individualybę, turinčią išvidinę jungtį, kuri telkia individus draugėn net ir tada, kai tauta kaip vienetas dar nepasirodo visuomeniniame gyvenime." From: Maceina, Antanas. *Tautinis Auklėjimas*. Kaunas:n.p., 1934: 45. Print.

their source.

The 72 streams, all but one of which take their source at Babel, do not only provide the fertile ground for the building of a series of unique worlds. They also take different peoples to different corners of the earth. Furthermore, like the water that goes through man and forms the major part of his earthly body, the streams of tradition permeate his innermost nature, and shape the physical appearance of his people, just like they shape its world. The streams flow through man's bodily emissions, giving life while preserving the nature of the tradition through kinship. His descendants thus preserve the inheritance of their people, through their language, their world, their bodies, and their land. This threefold diversity of traditions, according to worlds, lands and bodily kinship, now separates mankind, something that may appear as a punishment or a hindrance for the well-being of men, but nonetheless also opens up new possibilities for them. Covering the whole earth, the separate streams can open up new earthly lands; they can open up new worldly architectures, and new relations between the earth and men's bodies. This diversity begins at Babel, superseding the monolithic stream originating with the linguistic covenant between the Deity and the first man. This diversity is nevertheless kept concealed for a long time, something necessary in order for the streams to first flow and cover the earth, and for the variety of architectures to be perfected by several generations of world-builders and poets.

The diversity of worlds nonetheless only becomes meaningful when it is unveiled and given to mankind to contemplate, so that men will not only see other worlds, but foremost see and appropriate their homeland in its fullness, and perceive their worldly facticity and the nature of worldliness. They may thereby also see that even though the worlds represent the *Φύσις*, they nonetheless differ from the *Φύσις* itself. An earthly "thing" is indeed not equal to its worldly representation. The other aspects of the separation, that is, those concerning the land and kinship, can also be seen as a means given to man so that he would appropriate a part of his facticity, but on the earth rather than in the world. A diversity of lands and kinship bonds can indeed help men appropriate their earthly land and their earthly body, which find their origin in the same river as the world and the house of being that are built upon them. Man gathers these three aspects within himself, uniting the

threefold nature of the stream with his body, which comes from a particular stream, inhabits a particular land, and is thrown into a particular world.

The experience of the captivity nonetheless shows that man is not chained to a particular stream. He can visit and even make another house of being his home, very similar to the one given to him as an inheritance from his parents and his ancestors. He may travel to a foreign earthly land and also make it a new home, even though his body may be less fit to his new climate or environment than to his homeland. The third aspect is the only one from which any *ek-stasis* is impossible. Indeed, in no circumstances may he depart from the tradition given to him by kinship, a tradition that shaped his body and represents the foundation of his experience of the universe. Therefore, man may find a new land and a new home, but his kinship will forever follow him, wherever he may go. The journeying and settling into the foreign are the keys leading to the uncovering of the nature of worldliness, but they also present some dangers. By making a foreign land and house his new home, man gains a broader view of the universe, something that may contribute to give him a clearer vision of the nature of his destiny, that is, to see the nature of his essential being and the way to appropriate it. This new home may nonetheless also encourage him to neglect the bond that ties him to the river of his homeland. The severance of this bond would then nullify the benefits of the appropriation of the foreign, as he would lose the sight given to him by the river: the continuity of his kinship, which directly links him with the bodies of his forefathers, through a biological, anthropological, and historical connection revealing the fundamental “unity in diversity” of his people, and the “unity in diversity” of mankind as a whole. Furthermore, the loss of the kinship bond also endangers the diversity induced by the physical separation of mankind into different peoples, a diversity that also helps man to appropriate the nature of his body and his relation to his ancestors, and thereby helps him to better perceive his place in the Φύσις.

Even if man settles in a foreign land and world, he will forever conserve his kinship bond, but the threefold nature of the stream would then be severed, with the tradition transmitted by kinship separated from the land and the world in which he will live. The captives in Babylon may remain “ethnic Hebrews,” but they will

now live in the land of the sons of Aram, and dwell in their house of being. One may rightfully ask if this would necessarily be bad for mankind. Indeed, why would the unity between kinship, land, and language, be important? The event of Babel could have separated mankind according to a single one of the three aspects, but the Deity opted for a threefold separation. If the event was simply meant to reveal worldliness to man, a linguistic separation would then have been sufficient. Everyone may have remained in Babel, as one plurilingual people, as one group simply separated by a variety of idioms. Considering the omniscient nature of the Deity of the narrative, we shall assume that the threefold separation has a purpose, one that may be directly related to the unconcealment of worldliness.

Therefore, far from being a simple punishment for man's unfaithfulness to his creator, the events of both Babel and Babylon thus are the two halves of a lesson teaching man that he was blind, but now can see, see that his world is only one among others, which are all mere representations of something too wonderful to be directly experienced by him. The lens has been cracked, and it can now appear in man's view. The new station made accessible by the appropriation of the village can nevertheless constitute a permanent threat to the same diversity of traditions that is the key to the unconcealment of worldliness. The travel and tension between houses of being are both what allows worldliness to be seen, and also what puts it in danger.

Indeed, by appropriating new homes, men create the possibility to leave their original homelands, and even to forget them, thereby severing the continuity of the tradition from which they originate. Living in Babylon, one may adopt the local language and culture, dwell in its world and on its land, and blend with the local people. Such a blending nonetheless poses the risk of one world absorbing others, if the flow of travelers and exiles is sustained. As changing homes is considerably easier than building a new one, the ability to change homes will inevitably tend to lead to a concentration of the village, with certain houses attracting a larger number of travelers, while others would be deserted and fall into oblivion. If this process continues unimpeded, the village and its diversity, which is the source of the unconcealment of worldliness, could then be superseded by a single hegemonic house, thereby making the village disappear and throwing man back into

the blinding seclusion he experienced before.

Living by another stream, it may seem that the exilee from the house of Adam is a “native” of the house of Aram, originating from its river and the flow of its tradition. Looking solely at the world and the land that he dwells in, nothing may differentiate the exilee from the native. But here does the threefold nature of the stream show a usefulness, and perhaps even one of its purposes: the last component of the river, kinship, is the only one which is irrevocable, completely unaffected by the change of land and world. Man may have forgotten his original homeland and his homeworld, but his kinship relation with the other Judeans remains unaffected. Kinship may thus be seen as a beacon giving man a last chance to find back the path to the stream from which he originates, thereby preventing the concealment of his bond with his people as well as protecting the diversity of peoples which is itself a source of unconcealment, helping man to become conscious of the nature of his destiny. Kinship thus helps to maintain the diversity of the village. It helps to prevent the collapse of all the branches of the world-tree back into a single trunk, something that would annihilate the possibilities of unconcealment brought by its branched structure, by the village as opposed to a single house of being.

Furthermore, man’s consciousness of his belonging to his people is a first step toward **re-flection**, which is the process by which man **turns** and **look around** his own facticity. Re-flection occurs when he endeavors to perceive the unity, the oneness of the Φύσις beyond his own spatial and temporal presence, beyond the metaphysical architecture of his world, and beyond the *ego*-φύσις or *ego*-world dichotomy induced by his own *ego*, thereby walking the path that will lead him to become a conscious manifestation of the divine being incarnated by the Φύσις. One of the straightest paths toward such a re-flection begins with the realization of the nature of the links that unite men. The most fundamental and earthly of these links is kinship, a link that can withstand the destruction of man’s world, or of his earthly homeland. This link can be visually witnessed on earth, according to the kinship hierarchy: man can see that his earthly body resembles the one of his father and mother, of the other members of his family, and then of his people, of his continent, and can ultimately see how he is related to mankind as a whole, to all life, to the oneness of the Φύσις.

Re-flection allows the exploration of the upward flow of the river from which one originates, thereby allowing man to witness its continuity, its source, and its link with his own being. The permanence of kinship provides a safeguard to preserve this possibility of re-flection, as man cannot abandon it permanently. Hence, while the flexibility of man's relation to his house(s) of being is what allows him to unconceal the nature of worldliness and the limitations of his world, his kinship relation to his original people acts as an anchor, offering him the possibility to find his way back to his original home. This homecoming is necessary in order for him to truly benefit from his travel to the foreign. Only then can he perceive the continuity of the flow from which he originates, see how it differs from the other streams, and ultimately realize that his being is directly linked to the being of other men: to his people first, but also to mankind and even the *Φύσις* as a whole.

Therefore, in order to prevent the collapse of the village into a monolithic structure, something that would prevent the unconcealment of worldliness, man needs to realize that the foreign house to which he journeyed is different than his original home, which alone preserves the threefold nature of the stream. Venturing and appropriating the foreign is beneficial to man, as it unconceals his worldly facticity, but in order for the possibility of this revelation to perdure, the existence of a plurality of distinct houses must be sustained. Man must realize that he does not own the foreign as he owns his own homeworld, but rather is a guest in it, with his kinship relation acting as a reminder of this fact. According to the German master, "a guest is that foreigner who for a time becomes homely in a homely place foreign to them, and thus themselves bring what is homely for them into the homely of the foreign and are received by the homely of the foreign."¹⁰³ The journeying of the travelers brings the prospect of con-tacts and even the future possibility of ex-changes between houses and worlds. These relations must nonetheless remain a friendship, rather than a migration, which would lead to the abandonment of homes, and the concentration of the village.

¹⁰³ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister."* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996: 140–141. Print; Original German: "Gast ist derjenige Fremde, der in einem ihm fremden Heimischen zeitweise heimisch wird und damit selbst sein Heimisches in das fremde Heimische bringt und von diesem aufgenommen wird." From: GA 53: 175.

Man's attitude concerning this question of friendship thus is the key allowing him to prevent the collapse of the village and the concealment of worldliness: "In guest-friendship [*Gastfreundschaft*]... lies the resolve [*Entschiedenheit*] not to mix what is one's own, as one's own, with the foreign, but to let the foreigner be the one he is."¹⁰⁴ This resolve is what differentiates the linking of worlds from the collapse of the village into a single monolithic world, and it also can lead men to find the "truth of his people," which Heidegger thus defined: "the truth of a people is that manifestness of being out of which the people knows what it wills historically in willing itself, in willing to be itself."¹⁰⁵ The resolve to enter into a friendly relationship with the foreign, while remaining only a guest, separate from it, not only preserves the village but also reveals what "nationhood" is, the meaning of the concept of "people." Here lies one of the key elements unconcealed by the line between worlds. It opens up the possibility for man to see the need and purpose of a diversity of peoples. This diversity is a means allowing man to broaden his horizon, paving the way for an appropriation of the nature of his being, part of a people, part of mankind, and ultimately part of the oneness of the $\Phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$. It can thus contribute to give man a sight of the nature of his essential being.

5.2.5.2.3 The tension between worlds and the search for ground

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.^t: 141 (text in brackets added); Original German: "In der Gastfreundschaft liegt aber zugleich die Entschiedenheit, das Eigene als das Eigene nicht mit dem Fremden zu mischen, sondern den Fremden sein zu lassen, der er ist." From: GA 53: 176.

¹⁰⁵ Heidegger, Martin. *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine."* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014: 126. Print; Original German: "Die Wahrheit eines Volkes ist jene Offenbarkeit des Seins, aus der heraus das Volk weiß, was es geschichtlich will, indem es sich will, es selbst sein will." From: GA 39: 144.

ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܡܪܝܬܐ
 ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܡܪܝܬܐ
 ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܡܪܝܬܐ
 ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܡܪܝܬܐ

Who can deny the Names of the True One; He hath heard His true Nature in His Name: and if the name of Son and of Generate were found to be untrue, then was He a deceiver.¹⁰⁶

In the meta-narrative of the Babylon episode, the tension between two houses of being does not only imply the possibility for man to travel between them, or to be homely in both. It also implies that the two houses, and the two worlds within them, will interact with each other, through the intermediation of the exilee. Through this, they will not form a single structure. They will not fuse, nor will any real exchange between them take place. What will occur is only a tension, which represents man's consciousness of the difference between worlds, an awareness of the difference in the way various houses of being and various traditions lead to different ways of representing the Φύσις.

Being a guest in the foreign, man may notice that the other house contains elements that are not found in his homeland. The foreign can thus help man reveal the limitations of his home, and see the blind-spots of his world, that is, the fact that parts of the Φύσις have yet to be brought into it, or the fact that other worlds may have discovered new, purely worldly structures that can broaden man's horizon, his view of the Φύσις. It may therefore become a source of inspiration for the further edification of his home, the forging of new signs. The opposite is nonetheless just as possible. Foreigners may indeed become guests in his home and bring gifts into his world. The words of the psalmist echo with this phenomenon in the following verses: "there our captors required of us poems, and our tormentors, joy, saying, 'Sing us one of the poetries of Zion!'"¹⁰⁷ The captors may want to discover the home of

¹⁰⁶ Translation from: Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847: 314–315. Print; Original Syriac from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1961: 193. Print.

¹⁰⁷ TBA. The translation of the RSV-CE was modified to reflect the dual meaning of the word שִׁיר [šîr], which is usually translated as "song" in this

the exiles so as to contemplate the work of the poets who formed its architecture, which differs from the one in which they are now. What does such a tension bring to the travelers? The answer is once again in the same verse: joy. The brightful joy is bestowed on the men who put their home in tension with the foreign and who serve as mediators between them, that is, as vectors of a tension that leads to the further edification of the village.

This process will nonetheless not always go unhampered, as it may lead to the unveiling of contradictions that would shake the very basis of the home. Both houses may indeed represent some element of the Φύσις in two radically different and even contradictory manners. A comparison between these elements, induced by the tension between houses, would then expose the fact that one of the worlds may contain false representations. Such incompatibilities constitute a hint given to the travelers, showing them that not only there are different worlds with different representations of the Φύσις, but that these representations may also lack ground. If one accepts that the Φύσις exists independently of man's world(s), one must then accept that some representations may be more accurate than others, and that some may even be plain mis-representations. By putting contradictory representations in tension, man may thus strike a blow at the very structure of his dwelling, the result of which may be the uncovering of cracks at its weakest points. This *ek-stasis* thus may not only reveal man's world to himself. It may also be an occasion for this world to be tested so as to determine whether it is built on a stable ground or not, so as to see if its foundations are rooted in the earth, or on the thin air of clouds.

The tension between worlds thus raises the question of the grounding of the houses of being. Upon what basis do languages and the metaphysics they embed rest on? This "question of the ground," to borrow the name of a treatise of the German master (*Der Satz vom Grund*¹⁰⁸), is a question that has been at the center of philosophy since Plato, albeit using a different terminology. The mystery surrounding this large and tricky question certainly will not be dissipated here, but it may nonetheless be examined from the particular perspective of the present *ek-stasis* so as to see how the tension between a home and a foreign house can initiate

context, but also means "poetry."

¹⁰⁸ GA 10 (*Der Satz vom Grund*).

the questioning of the grounding of the houses themselves. This questioning begins with the unconcealment of the ground itself and an investigation of its nature.

The ground of something is the basis for its existence, and its origin. Leibniz famously said that *nihil est sine ratione*,¹⁰⁹ a statement that Heidegger very adequately renders as “nothing is without reason/ground [*Grund*].”¹¹⁰ The German word *Grund* can indeed mean “reason” as the source of something and also “earthly ground.” This gives us a first hint concerning the nature of the ground. Another comes from the Greek, as the German philosopher also translates as “Grund” the word ἀρχή,¹¹¹ a word that appears in the first verse of the Gospel according to S^t John: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, “in the beginning was the Word.”¹¹² The ground is the basis, the reason, and the beginning of things, three definitions that fit our common conceptions. But there is another, which is surreptitiously given by Heidegger and is less obvious than the aforementioned ones: the ground as the “essence of truth”¹¹³ (*das Wesen der Wahrheit*). More than the others, this definition precisely reflects the nature of the ground upon which houses of being are built. A part of the house is grounded when it rests on a sure soil, when it is true, as opposed to being based on clouds. Here can the rather subtle distinction between the various definitions be seen: since *nihil est sine ratione*, even the clouds must thus have a basis, an origin, a beginning, but what is based on clouds is nevertheless not true, as the clouds are not themselves in contact with the ground. Finally, the last and perhaps most important aspect of the ground is its link with the earth.

Each one of the various houses of being composing the village possesses its own architecture, which defines the world it contains. Each language encloses a metaphysics, fruit of a tradition, and of the poetic work of countless men. The poets who built these worlds can either have based them on the ground or on clouds, based them on something they know for true, or on the produce of their imag-

¹⁰⁹ GA 10: 3.

¹¹⁰ TBA. Ibid.

¹¹¹ GA 14: 69.

¹¹² Joh 1:1. The word has a long history of philosophical use, with various meanings, and is also used in the Septuagint to translate the first word of the biblical text: “בְּרֵאשִׁית,” “In the beginning”.

¹¹³ GA 5: 270.

ination. However, can man *know* something as absolutely true? Descartes showed us that everything can be doubted, but even his *cogito*,¹¹⁴ as an example of the least doubtful thing that can be thought of, is itself grounded: in the earth, in the phenomenon we experience, as self-awareness is also linked to the phenomenon. In the narrative, language sprouted from the earth, with Adam being shown the animals in Eden and asked to name them from his sensory experience. Language is doubly based on earthly manifestations, firstly because the first signs are not meta-physical concepts, but rather reflections of what man sees, touches, and feels, that is, basic impressions and emotions perceived through his body. Secondly, language is also based on the earth according to the nature of the signifiers forming language: sounds, carvings on tablets, hand-gestures, all of which are also linked with sensory experiences.

The earthly foundation of all languages is what allows them to be learned by other men. According to Quine's gavagai experiment, one can never be absolutely sure of the exact meaning of any word, but the fact that mankind as a whole shares a common core of earthly experiences gives us a strong basis, considerably reducing uncertainty. Any world can be extended and built further from basic signs, from the world itself, something that can at some point lead to the belief that man may be able to do away with the necessity of a ground. Losing this proximity and this bond with the earth, man's world may increasingly rely on the clouds, departing from the truth as it departs from the earth. This is the danger of the Τέχνη, and the "metaphysics" vilified by Heidegger: a world that becomes the source of its own becoming, devoid of ground and without any purpose other than its own endless expansion.

The contacts between worlds made possible by their tension nonetheless offer a possibility to unconceal this danger to man, and it can also clear a path so that man can avoid or even eliminate this danger. This path is the pursuit of the ground, the investigation of the worlds to discern the truth in them, to see whether they are built upon the ground or upon clouds. This search for the truth of the worlds is not simply aimed at the determination of whether a "thing" or a statement is true or false. Indeed, the ground, truth, "is not so much some particular truth as it is knowing about

¹¹⁴ Descartes, René. *Discours de la méthode*. Foucher, 1861: 14. Print.

the essence of truth itself.”¹¹⁵ The grounding of the world is a path for the unconcealment of the ground, a path that requires a “will to ground” in order to be seen and trodden. It also requires a sort of faith, as one must believe that truth exists before one undertakes the project of unconcealing it. The tension between worlds thus cannot be initiated by a relativist or a perspectivist, for reasons that are well explained by the Scottish philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre:

The relativist challenge rests upon a denial that rational debate between and rational choice among rival traditions is possible; the perspectivist challenge puts in question the possibility of making truth-claims from within any one tradition. For if there is a multiplicity of rival traditions, each with its own characteristic modes of rational justification internal to it, then that very fact entails that no one tradition can offer those outside it good reasons for excluding the theses of its rivals. Yet if this is so, no one tradition is entitled to arrogate to itself an exclusive title; no one tradition can deny legitimacy to its rivals. What seemed to require rival traditions so to exclude and so to deny was belief in the logical incompatibility of the theses asserted and denied within rival traditions, a belief which embodied a recognition that if the theses of one such tradition were true, then some at least of the theses asserted by its rivals were false¹¹⁶

Both the relativist and the perspectivist deny the existence of a truth outside of a precise world and tradition. Both can leap from house to house, from world to world, but contrary to the bridge, they will not be able to put these worlds in tension with one another, and they therefore will not reap the benefits of the multiplicity of houses. MacIntyre nonetheless argues that “genuinely to adopt the standpoint of a tradition thereby commits one to its view of what is true and false and, in so committing one, prohibits

¹¹⁵ Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Truth*. Indiana University Press, 2010: 200. Print; Original German: “Für uns ist das Wahre heute nicht so sehr ein Inhaltliches, als das Wissen um das Wesen der Wahrheit selbst.” From: GA 36–37: 262.

¹¹⁶ MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 1st edition. University of Notre Dame Press, 1989: 352. Print.

one from adopting any rival standpoint”¹¹⁷ and that “the multiplicity of traditions does not afford a multiplicity of perspectives among which we can move, but a multiplicity of antagonistic commitments, between which only conflict, rational or nonrational, is possible.”¹¹⁸ This argument seems to wrongly assume that knowing a tradition implies a commitment to it and an acceptance of its claim to be true, even though one can be a guest within a tradition, and nevertheless retain his attachment to another, his home in particular.

One can indeed adopt different standpoints, belonging to different worlds (or even within a single world). One can be multilingual and live by different traditions, switching between them at will, or contrasting them. This nonetheless does not constitute a perspectivist view, as the various standpoints from various traditions do not imply an equal valuation, nor an equal truthfulness of these standpoints. What has been forgotten is that language is not a purely meta-physical construction, an arbitrary product of man’s imagination. Language finds its origin in the earth, and it cannot exist without it, even though man may attempt to sever language from it. The earth and the Φύσις indeed exist independently from human observers. It is an absolute, a ground that is identical for all mankind. The experience that man has of it, of course, may vary, according to differences in location or bodily attributes, but this does not lessen the fact that all men share a common ground, which is not relative to them, nor a mere perspective.

To recognize the *truth of the earth*, that is, to have faith in this earth, is an antidote to the poison of relativism, and a prerequisite to the tension between worlds that can be initiated by the men who dwell in the two different houses. This tension, however, is one between two worlds, rather than one between man and the earth. Language is grounded in the earth, but does it mean that there is a *truth of the world(s)*? Can any part of a world be shared by all men, by all houses of being? This is a very difficult question, and yet one that must be addressed if we are to see what the tension between worlds entails, something that may lead us to perceive the deeper nature of the effect of the journey to the foreign on the language of the men of the meta-narrative.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.: 367.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.: 367.

Philosophers, linguists, and mathematicians have for a very long time searched for a linguistic core, a universal basis for language that would, in turn, serve as a basis for thought, or searched to mathematize language in order to eradicate its fuzzy and subjective nature. This enterprise remains largely vain and fruitless, perhaps because of the fact that it presumes that language can exist independently from the earth, that is, that there is indeed a realm of forms or ideas, disconnected from the phenomenon. Every house of being needs a ground in order to be built and stand. Many have considered “logic” and mathematics to be a form of language, universal and absolute.¹¹⁹ The laws of symbolic logic are indeed shared by speakers of all languages: $2+2=4$ for every so-called “rational” person, even though different people might use different signifiers to write this equation.

What is shared is nevertheless not an “ideal” language, a “logical” language, perfect and absolute, but rather only the ground upon which language is based. If man can say that he knows that $2+2=4$ as an absolute truth, it is because he experienced the concepts of number and their addition as an earthly phenomenon. If I take two grains of wheat and put them in front of me, and then add two other grains, I will always have four of them as a result, regardless of the nature of my language, my culture, or my education. Symbolic mathematical languages are only meaningful when they are grounded, when they reflect the truth of the earth. Some people count using a base 10 because our body has 10 fingers, while others use a base 12 because of the 12 annual full moons, but all counting systems are true because they conform to a phenomenological, earthly experience. This would seem to imply that any *truth of the world* would be limited to what is directly grounded in the earth. We cannot experience advanced symbolic logic with our senses, but these advanced concepts are only derivations from a series of basic axioms which, on the other hand, are indeed directly experienced. Here lies the power of the house of being and of the world it opens: to help us transcend the limitations of our direct sensory experiences. This power nonetheless loses its value when the constructions we build do not rest on a sure ground.

¹¹⁹ This view was, and remains to this day, a characteristic of the so-called “analytic philosophers” such as Gottlob Frege and the “early Wittgenstein” (Wittgenstein at first adopted such a view of language and logic, but his opinion radically changed later in his life).

Man could indeed appear to live well in a purely fantastic (in its literal sense) world, one that would be disconnected from the earth and entirely based on clouds, but he would then stand still on the path of thinking. He would abandon his destiny and his place as a creature facing his creator. Man thus has to live in a grounded world if he wants to fulfill his destiny, but more than this, he must also feel the ground of being beyond the ground of his world. The unconcealment of contradictions between worlds offers man a chance to become conscious of the question of the grounding of his world(s), and to attempt to feel to the ground itself:

If we are to be receptive to the Ground of Being, we need to have the courage to meet the unknown, to renounce the right to cognize and tabulate, and to endure the mystery that which cannot be conceptually comprehended — in short, to pause and inwardly dwell in that to which we are all too unaccustomed the radiance of Divine Being.¹²⁰

The question of the grounding of man's world(s) is crucial for the fulfillment of his destiny, as only a true vision of the nature of the *Φύσις* may lead him to perceive and to appropriate his essential being. A world based on clouds would only lead him away from this. The grounding of his world is nonetheless far from trivial to accomplish, and men will often look for shortcuts on the path. When man attempts to ground the world in itself, without a connection to the earth, is when the clouds appear, and when he then loses sight of the path. If there is a common part of the world shared by all humans, it is the capacity to create language and build a house of being, rather than features of the houses themselves, or perhaps only the features that are directly in contact with the earth.

For a long time, men have been convinced of the existence of a common framework establishing the principles of human rea-

¹²⁰ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971: 80. Print. Original German: "Zum Zulassen des Grundes gehören der Mut zum Unerhörten, der Verzicht auf verstehendes Einordnen, das Aushalten-können des begrifflich nicht Faßbaren, kurz, ein Innehalten und inständliches Verweilen in der ungewohnten Strahlung des Seins." From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Der Alltag als Übung: vom Weg zur Verwandlung*. Bern: Hans Huber, 1962: 100. Print.

son. As told by MacIntyre, “philosophers have argued that insofar as the protagonists of two rival points of view are successful in understanding one another, it must be the case that they share standards of rational evaluation.”¹²¹ The philosopher of language Donald Davidson also said that “finding the common ground is not subsequent to understanding, but a condition of it.”¹²² This common ground is not formed by a transcendental realm of *forms*, nor by a “natural” preconceived language of thought and reason, but rather by the foundations of the houses, which are so constrained by and dependent on the earthly ground that they are almost identical across all languages and cultures. Therefore, to attempt to ground the world in itself, or to find a “universal” metaphysics, would be to abandon the strife of world and earth, which is the source of man’s being and the foundation of language and poetry. More importantly, it would also represent a severance of the link uniting man and his world to the Φύσις, thereby also severing man from his own destiny, which is intertwined with its nature.

The tension between worlds is therefore only meaningful when it occurs in close connection with the earth and the skies. To put worlds in tension without addressing the question of their grounding would naturally lead men either to relativism or perspectivism, because no truth could be discerned without a proper point of reference. Such a reference can be found in the earth and the skies, which both exist independently of any particular world and any particular people. Worlds are nonetheless not only defined by their grounding. Worlds are different from the earth: they are what makes the earth and the skies intelligible to man, but they are themselves different from both. The earth becomes meaningful through the world that makes it accessible, just as the world itself is only meaningful if it is grounded in the earth. The tension between worlds can thus be a tool used to nurture the grounding and the edification of all worlds, as the contrast between houses and their ground can allow man to discern the true from the false. It can also allow him to learn from other architectures, inducing a more efficient building of the world and a better intelligibility of

¹²¹ MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 1st edition. University of Notre Dame Press, 1989: 370. Print.

¹²² Quoted in Ibid.: 370, from: Davidson, Donald. “Objectivity and Practical Reason.” *Reasoning Practically*. Ed. Edna Ullmann-Margalit. Oxford University Press, 2000: 25. Print.

the Φύσις. This, however, requires a certain humility, as one may have to admit that his own world has weaknesses, as argued by the Scottish philosopher:

The only rational way for the adherents of any tradition to approach intellectually, culturally, and linguistically alien rivals is one that allows for the possibility that in one or more areas the other may be rationally superior to it in respect precisely of that in the alien tradition which it cannot as yet comprehend.¹²³

The tension between worlds is an opportunity to learn from other traditions, certain aspects of which may have been better developed than others. In the Babylon episode, this clash is limited to only two worlds: the world of Adam and the world of Aram. In the earthly narrative, this event is marked by coercion and violence. It is not a friendly interaction between peoples. In the meta-narrative, on the other hand, this event occurs in a more serene atmosphere. It is not so much a violent conquest as a travel, an exploration of the village, although one nonetheless done under duress. The balance of power between earth and world is thus dissymmetric, as while the Babylonian empire reigns as supreme ruler of the earth, the house of Aram does not enjoy the same status in the world. On the contrary, in this case, the house of Adam is the one which is more “impressive” and possesses more prestige, as it is the first house of all mankind. According to the psalm sung by the rivers of Babylon, the captors asked to hear some of the poetry of Zion, requesting an interaction between their worlds, but they only did so after having ravaged the homeland of the exiles:

Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem, how they said, ‘Rase it, rase it! Down to its foundations!’ O daughter of Babylon, you devastator! Happy shall he be who requites you with what you have done to us! Happy shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock! (Psa 137:7–9)¹²⁴

¹²³ MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 1st edition. University of Notre Dame Press, 1989: 388. Print.

¹²⁴ “זָכֹר יְהוָה לְבִנֵי אֲדוֹם אֵת יוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם הָאֲמָרִים עָרוֹ עָרוֹ עַד הִסּוֹד בָּהּ: בֵּת-בְּבֶל הַשְׁדִּוּדָה אֲשֶׁר־י שִׁשְׁלִים-לָהּ אֶת-נְמוּלָהּ שְׁנִמְלֹתָ לָנוּ: אֲשֶׁר־י שִׂיֵּאֲחוּ וְנִפְץ: אֶת-עַלְלֵיהָ אֶל-הַסֶּלַע:” (Psa 137:7–9).

The desire for hegemony of a part of the dwellers of the house of Aram led them to attempt to wipe out the house of Adam, without them realizing that it also was the home of their own ancestors. Rather than to be prepared to accept the other as “rationally superior” when they encounter a conflict uncovering a lack of ground of a part of their abode, it is indeed easier for them to “raze it down to its foundations,” that is, to topple the construction that shows the inadequacy of their house, and to “take their little ones and dash them against the rock,” that is, to take the blocks of the foreign house, fruit of the sons of Adam’s poetic work, and dash them against the ones whose lack of ground they expose in the house of Aram. Doing so, they intend to leave the exiles without shelter, on the naked earth, and thus forced to dwell in the home of their captors, which alone would be left standing.

The Hebrew exiles are nevertheless not all willing to forgo their homeland and homeworld. In the narrative, they will indeed petition the Persian conqueror of Babylon and be granted permission to return to their homeland (Ezr 1). Contrary to the military conflict of the narrative, the struggle over language between Israelites and Babylonians in the meta-narrative will nevertheless not result in a clear victory of either camp. The Babylonians will fail to annihilate the house of Adam, but they will ultimately succeed in displacing it as the mother tongue of the dwellers of the Holy Land. The Hebrews will succeed in preserving the heritage of Adam, but they will fail to keep it as their mother tongue, their first home. With the liberation of the captives by Cyrus, the custody of the Adamic house thus begins to be abandoned by the Hebrews, as the returnees bring with them the language of their captors to their motherland. People like Nehemiah attempted to resist this trend, banishing everything foreign (Neh 13:3), but the custody, no matter what, was not in vain, as the language will remain forever preserved, in writing, waiting to be appropriated by subsequent generations.¹²⁵

The descendants of the returnees will thus mainly dwell in

¹²⁵ There are clues of the existence of post-exilic Hebrew writings in the narrative itself, such as the prolog of the book of Wisdom of Sirach, which states that the book was originally written in the language of the custody, but no such original remains. Thus, from the point of view of the narrative, the return from the exile marks the beginning of the fading of the language of Adam, even though it will perdure as a second language.

the house of Aram, being brought to a house which is not the home of their people, but rather a foreign house. For them, the tension between worlds will remain a possibility, but its nature will be different than the one experienced by the captives in Babylon: they are raised in the house of Aram, but their first encounter with a “foreign” house will be with the home of their ancestors, the house of Adam, learned and made home through the written law, forever preserved as the inheritance of all the sons of Adam, and not only of the Hebrews. The tension between worlds can occur among all people, and between any house. It will continue to occur until the end of time. The aim of the tension indeed remains forever desirable: it is a search for the ground, a quest for the truth, but one in which the nature of the quest may be more important than its end. The essence of the tension between worlds is not the overpowering and destruction of one house by another, but rather a friendly interaction that strengthens different houses, clearing out the clouds and reinforcing their earthly foundation.

The search for the ground induced by the tension is in itself a re-flection, a search for what links man to the Φύσις. It is a quest for his origin, and ultimately for the source of all that *is*. It is a spiritual experience, rather than a mere desire for abstract knowledge, an experience that can lead to the uncovering of the essence of truth, and not only to a manifestation of a truth. In the words of Heidegger:

If we now want to grasp the essence of truth, that is, work it out, then this means that, through our acting, we must experience and demonstrate how much truth we can endure and withstand. This is the measure by which truth displays itself to us on each occasion, namely, as that which makes our Dasein sure, bright, and strong in its Being¹²⁶

More than truth as knowledge or adequation between world and Φύσις, the unconcealment brought by the tension is the brightful joy bestowed on those who see the path destined to them. This is

¹²⁶ Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Truth*. Indiana University Press, 2010: 71. Print; Original German: “Und wollen wir nun das Wesen der Wahrheit fassen, d.h. erwirken, dann bedeutet das: Wir müssen handelnd erfahren und beweisen, wieviel Wahrheit wir ertragen und aushalten; je nach diesem Maß stellt sich uns die Wahrheit als solche heraus, nämlich als das, was unser Dasein in seinem Sein sicher, hell und stark macht.” From: GA 36–37: 88.

true for all people and for all times, but the meta-narrative gives us a supplementary insight concerning the peculiar situation of the post-captivity period, a time which is not only marked by the tension between two worlds, but also by the coexistence of two laws, written in two different houses of being.

5.2.5.2.4 Different peoples, different languages, but one Law and one path

The tension between worlds is an event that will occur in almost any conceivable universe endowed with language. Even without a Babel-like confusion, a single language will sooner or later ineluctably split into dialects, which will, in turn, evolve into non-mutually intelligible languages and ultimately lead to encounters between them. The biblical narrative here offers us something very peculiar, by the fact that the Babylonian episode not only represents the appearance of a second language in the world of the Hebrews but also the appearance of this same language as a medium for the writing of the narrative itself. Moreover, as the narrative is itself also part of the Law of the people of God in the narrative, according to the strange-loop linking the biblical text to the narrative universe, it implies that the Aramaic portion of the Scriptures constitutes a revelation, different than the previous ones in that it occurs outside of the house of Adam. The new piece of the divine law is indeed placated on the walls of the house of Aram. The words of king Nebuchadnezzar, the prophecy of Daniel, will now form a part of the Law given to mankind by the Deity, joined with the Law of Moses and the other books of the Bible written before the Babylonian captivity. This fact, which comes very inconspicuously in the narrative, nonetheless has deep repercussions on the (hi)story of language and being in the meta-narrative as a whole.

The new dual nature of the Law will mark the beginning of the dissolution of the distinction between custodians and pioneers. In order to perceive the nature of this event, its context must nonetheless first be briefly depicted. From the time of Babel, the sons of Adam have been divided into a multitude of peoples, mainly defined by three characteristics: their kinship, their land, and their language. Another division also arose in parallel with the toppling

of the tower. The custodians, later called the Hebrews, were indeed given the charge of securing the tradition coming from Adam and his descendants, down to the events of Babel, while the other peoples were sent out as pioneers to explore and appropriate the lands of the earth, building new houses of being and forming new traditions. The Babylonian captivity temporarily cuts off the leaders of the custodians from their land, depriving them of one of the three components of their identity as a people (See § 5.2.2). The end of the captivity then marks a renewal of the bond linking them to their homeland, but the progressive replacement of the tongue of Adam nevertheless cuts off another of these bonds.

The last bond, the kinship between the members of this people, is also deeply affected, as indicated by the book of Nehemiah, in which the prophet describes and condemns the Hebrews for taking wives among other peoples (Neh 13:23–27). Before then, the Hebrews always welcomed men and women willing to join their faith and to take upon themselves the yoke of the Law of Moses, among whom is Ruth the Moabite, mentioned as an ancestor of Jesus in the Gospel according to St Matthew,¹²⁷ who proclaimed her belonging to the Hebrew people: “where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God” (Rut 1:16¹²⁸). Therefore, the absence of kinship should not constitute an insurmountable obstacle to joining a people, the three components forming a balance rather than a rigid law. In the days of Nehemiah, however, what occurred was not an exchange between peoples and an exchange *of* people between peoples, as it was the case for Ruth, but rather the dissolving of their identity as a people, with them ignoring their kinship altogether, forgetting their language and the nature of their land, which was given to them by the Deity (Neh 13:23–27). The reaction of Nehemiah and his followers is extreme, using the passage of the Law mentioning that “no Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none belonging to them shall enter the assembly of the LORD for ever” (Deu 23:3¹²⁹) as an excuse to separate themselves from “all those

¹²⁷ Mat 1:5.

¹²⁸ “אֶל-אִשָּׁר תִּלְכִּי אֵלַי וּבְאִשָּׁר תִּלְיִנִי אֶלֶּיךָ עַמִּי וְאֶל-הֵי אֱלֹהֵי:” (Rut 1:16).

¹²⁹ “לֹא-יָבֹא עַמּוֹנִי וּמוֹאָבִי בְּקִהְלֵי יְהוָה נָם דּוֹר עֲשָׂרִי לֹא-יָבֹא לָהֶם בְּקִהְלֵי יְהוָה:” (Deu 23:4 HND). The reason for this command is found in the “עַד-עוֹלָם:”

of foreign descent” (Neh 13:3¹³⁰), even though far more than ten generations separate this commands from the end of the captivity.¹³¹ This faction thereby symbolically separates itself from the descendants of Ruth the Moabite, and thus also from the Messiah who will come from her bloodline.

The action of the people forgetting its own identity, combined with the extreme reaction against all those perceived as “foreign,” which closed the possibility of Gentiles joining the Hebrews, both mark the collapse of the people to whom the custody of the house of Adam was given. The abandonment of the custody can thus be seen as more than a purely linguistic event: it initiates a process of slow dissolution of the custodians as a people. The custodians have fulfilled their role, and they can now be disbanded, as all peoples will now be able to appropriate the remnants of the house of Adam, which was the home of the ancestors of all mankind, and all will be invited to worship the one Deity. In the future, this house will belong to all those who will make it their home, but it won’t be the first home of anyone anymore. Custodians will intermarry with the pioneers. They will make other houses of being their first home, and dwell in remote lands, joining these peoples, as Ruth the Moabite and others joined them in the past. Soon, all will be pioneers, with a new mission brought by the new Aramaic component of the Law.

The people of God is now composed of the members of different peoples, who are united by their faith in the Deity and by the gift that the Deity bestowed upon them, that is, a revealed law, which not only contains commandments and statutes, but also includes the story of the origin of mankind and of the origin of their ancestral home, the house of Adam. This Law is a treasure for all peoples, preserving a knowledge lost by their forefathers, and the house of Adam itself, as the language of this law will be all that

next verses: “because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came forth out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.” (Deu 23:4)

עַל־דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־קָדְמוּ אֲתָכֶם בְּלֶחֶם וּבָמִים בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּצִאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְאֲשֶׁר שָׂכַר
:”עָלֶיךָ אֶת־בְּלָעַם בֶּן־בְּעוֹר מִפְּתוֹר אֶרֶם נְהָרִים לְקַלְלֶךָ: (Deu 23:5 HND).

¹³⁰ “וַיְהִי כִשְׁמֹעַם אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה וַיְבָדִילוּ כָל־עָרֹב מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל:” (Neh 13:3).

¹³¹ The word “forever” would here seem to concern the extent of the validity of the law itself, rather than constitute a permanent refusal to accept the descendants of the Ammonite and the Moabites in the assembly.

is left of it. The Law is now cleaved between two houses: house of Adam and house of Aram. The Aramaic portion of the Law can be read and heard by all Aramaic speakers who are spread around the land of the Babylonian and then Persian empire. It forms a stepping-stone, initiating new peoples to the divine revelation and preparing them to receive it fully, which implies making the house of Adam their second home. An increasingly larger part of mankind will thus be given sight of the path, thereby receiving a helping hand that will guide them toward the fulfillment of their destiny. The way by which the revelation is unfolded, however, is itself also designed as a guide.

Before the Babylonian episode, the house of Adam was the sole recipient of the divine law. The house could thus be mistakenly considered “sacred,” and its ground divinely validated by the fact that the Deity chose it as the vehicle of a revelation. Such an attitude toward language nonetheless precisely is what led mankind to the building of the tower of Babel, as the inhabitants of the city mistook their power over language for a power over the universe as a whole. The advent of the written law made this danger even more present, and its consequences even more devastating, as their dwelling of the house of Adam would seem to imply the ability to change the Law according to their wishes, as they can together decide to arbitrarily alter the meaning of the words used to express it. Furthermore, if the Adamic language is considered validated by the Law, the dwellers of the house of Adam could then deem that their modifications and extensions of their house would be “true” as well. This would lead to an illusory division, between those who dwell in the grounded house of Adam, whose creations are “true,” and the “foreign,” which would lack the divinely validated grounding. The Babylonian episode, however, hinders such a simplistic view, as there are now two different houses of being that enjoy the privilege of being the vessels of a divine revelation. For now, the effects of this cleaved nature of the Law are not fully manifest, as there are no direct exchanges between the two houses. The dwellers of the house of Adam can nonetheless already more easily avoid the pitfall of thinking that they and their house may be “sacred” as a whole, and their world inherently superior to the others. The next *ek-stasis* will reveal further implications of this design of the divine law for man’s destiny, and notably his relationship with his essential being.

Chapter 6

The Pentecost episode

The Babylonian episode, which was described in the previous chapter, induced a series of deep transformations of the world of the meta-narrative. Man's life of seclusion within the house of being in which he lived from his infancy is now ended, and he has begun to explore the wider world, starting with the house of Aram, in which he was taken by force. In Babylon, a foreign house was shown to him, was "taught to him," and it progressively became a second home. Before then, following Babel, man already encountered a foreign house, but never before his arrival in Babylon was he able to cross a foreign house's threshold and to behold its inner architecture. Perhaps more important than the appropriation of the foreign house, the homecoming from the foreign is the defining event of the previous *ek-stasis*. Having made a second dwelling his home, man is now given an opportunity to see what homeliness is. The nature of homeliness was indeed previously concealed by the spell of a *lethe*, as his home was something granted to him unconsciously during his infancy, and which he never could escape before his first travel outside his home.

The homecoming nevertheless offers man something more than the possibility to unconceal the homeliness of his home. It also allows him to put two different worlds, sheltered by two different houses, in tension so as to unveil the essence of worldliness, that is, to uncover the nature of the meta-physical architecture that constrains and empowers man's *logos* and his will. The tension between the two worlds can also lead man to begin to realize that

every world may partly lack ground; that they may give man a distorted view of the universe and of themselves. The world then becomes matter for re-flection, for thinking, and potentially a source for the fulfillment of man's destiny. The revelation of a new part of the divine law also contributes to accentuating this invitation to re-flect on the world's foundation. The Law, the sacred space within the house, is indeed now cleaved between two houses, and two different worlds. Men, both custodians and pioneers alike, will now *be required* to travel in order to behold the fullness of the sacred structure that is meant to guide them toward the manifestation of their essential being. The distinction between the two categories of peoples will begin to fade, and different peoples will begin to be invited to the two sacred spaces, which will now form the center of the village.

Then, more than six centuries after these events, man's vehicle will be taken to a new station, which will further this outward movement, away from seclusion and toward a greater level of interaction between the peoples of the village. The narrative of the Pentecost episode is one of the most well-known passages of the Bible, telling of the descent of the Holy Spirit onto the disciples, and of the miracle that followed: the "speaking in tongues," that is, the act of talking in languages that one has not previously learned or known before. This Pentecost is also a starting point, marking the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel and of the Law, to all the peoples of living on the earth. This not only implies the writing down of the third and last part of the narrative, the "New Testament," written in Greek, but also the translation of the rest of the Law into all languages.

This series of earthly events will have profound repercussions in the world of the meta-narrative, and be the source of a new *ekstasis*. Firstly, the Pentecost miracle of the narrative can be seen an effortless, instantaneous journey of the disciples toward distant houses of the village of being, houses that are not learned nor appropriated, but rather only given to be seen for a brief period of time, before the disciples are taken back to their home, as if they traveled on the wings of a divine creature. This event will mark the beginning of the disciples' **mission**, which will be to bring the Temple, the sacred space of the Law cleaved into three different houses, to all the houses of the village. The emergence of **trans-lation** will allow them to build **bridges** rather than mere lines

and tensions between houses. This will allow ex-changes between world, and the bringing of the Temple to the foreign, that is, the trans-lation of the Law. In turn, the dwellers of these distant houses will also be invited to come as **pilgrims** to the Temple, that is, to come and appropriate the three original languages of the Law: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

With the previous *ek-stasis*, man was able to put two houses and two worlds in tension. As this tension was unique and limited to only two houses, the clearing operated by the tension was thus also self-concealing: with only one tension, the “lineness” of the line was concealed to man. He remained unable to see its nature, as a contrasting element was lacking. With the conjunction of the Pentecost episode, the triune nature of the Law, and the appearance of trans-lation, a plurality of tensions and bridges will emerge. This plurality of tensions will constitute a new stat-ion, a new environment for man, one which will give him a chance to unconceal the nature of these tensions and the nature of the **difference** between worlds. This unconcealment of the nature of the difference between worlds, combined with the emergence of bridges between them, that is, the possibility of ex-changes, will also lead to another unconcealment.

Indeed, the necessity for the disciples to bring the Temple to the foreign will imply a necessity for them to try to find what unites these worlds in order to find a common ground necessary to fashion a sacred image of the Temple inside the distant houses, and in order to find what separates them as well. This will induce a **clash of worlds** and a **clash of laws**: men will have to seek the truth of their world and the truth of the Law meant to guide them toward the manifestation of their essential being. What this process will unveil is the direction that the building of the village must take, that is, the fact that they should not build it for the sake of the Τέχνη itself, but rather for the manifestation of divine being, by building up the tension between earth and world.

Through this, the unceasing travels and the creation of a multitude of bridges between the houses of the village will transform its nature. It will soon cease to be a mere village, composed of isolated, disorderly arrayed houses, and it will instead become a **city of being**, one that can either be built like the tower of Babel, for man’s own sake, or become a stepping stone for the fulfillment

of his destiny.

6.1 The narrative of the Pentecost episode

The main source of information concerning the Pentecost event is the Acts of the Apostles, authored by S^t Luke. It thus recounts the beginning of the Pentecost episode:

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Act 2:1–4¹)

Attempting to be idiomatic and simple by translating the Greek *ὁμοθυμαδὸν* [*homothymadōn*] as “all together,” the translation here masks an important parallel. More than simple physical proximity, it can designate a communion of will, the fact of being “of one accord.”² An Arabic version renders it beautifully: “of one mind/soul/self” (*معا بنفس واحدة*),³ showing that they are indeed “in one place,” both spiritually and physically. This echoes with the aftermath of the building of the tower of Babel, when the sons of Noah were made unable to communicate with one another and scattered across the earth. Here, the Apostles and their companions are like the Babelites before the confusion, that is, all in one

¹ “Καὶ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ἦσαν πάντες ὁμοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό. καὶ ἐγένετο ἄφνω ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἦχος ὥσπερ φερομένης πνοῆς βιαίας καὶ ἐπλήρωσεν ὅλον τὸν οἶκον οὗ ἦσαν καθήμενοι καὶ ὥφθησαν αὐτοῖς διαμεριζόμεναι γλῶσσαι ὥσει πυρὸς καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐφ’ ἓνα ἕκαστον αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν πάντες πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ ἤρξαντο λαλεῖν ἐτέραις γλώσσαις καθὼς τὸ πνεῦμα ἐδίδου ἀποφθέγγεσθαι αὐτοῖς.” (Act 2:1–4).

² the Septuagint of Exo 19:18: “ἀπεκρίθη δὲ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ὁμοθυμαδὸν καὶ εἶπαν πάντα ὅσα εἶπεν ὁ θεός ποιήσομεν καὶ ἀκουσόμεθα ἀνήνεγκεν δὲ Μωϋσῆς τοὺς λόγους τοῦ λαοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.” The prefix *ὅμο* [*homo*] is transparent in English, but the meaning of the other part of the word is not. This second part is not to be confused with *θυμός* [*thymós*], meaning “rage:” it is rather derived from the word *θύμος* [*thýmos*], which has a rather wide range of use, including “passion,” “will” or “emotions.”

³ From the Van Dyke Arabic version (Bibleworks).

place, in a community of spirit. Contrary to the builders of Babel, however, their common intention is here pure. The builders of Babel indeed denied God and desired to build a tower for the glory of their own name. The builders of Jerusalem, on the other hand, are here to build a Church, for the glory of God's name. The creator's prophecy concerning Babel can nevertheless also reflect the aftermath of the Pentecost: "this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them" (Gen 11:6⁴). The major difference is that while their purpose was evil at Babel, it is good at Pentecost. God will therefore help the builders of the Church, even though he impeded the work of the builders of the tower.

The sound of a "mighty wind" that they heard as they were gathered would seem to be an indication of the coming of the spirit, as the words for "spirit" and "wind" are one and the same in both Hebrew and Aramaic.⁵ Then, "there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed [or, cloven] and resting on each one of them."⁶ For the Venerable Bede, the Spirit appeared in the form of fiery tongues because the people filled with the Spirit are burning with zeal and want to speak, in order to teach with flaming words the Gospel of the Lord.⁷ St Augustine tells us not to be troubled by the cleaved nature of the tongues, which symbolized their diversity and does not imply any schisms.⁸ These tongues are shaped with flames that rest on each disciple, but they also give them a "gift of tongues," which here appears for the first time in the Scriptures: "they began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Much has been written concerning this verse, which constitutes the heart of the Pentecost narrative. We will therefore now attempt to uncover the meaning of this expression: "speaking in tongues," a question that is still hotly debated in religious circles.

⁴ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הֵן עַם אֶחָד וּשְׂפָה אֶחָת לְכָלֶם וְזֶה הַחֶלֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת וְעַתָּה לֹא-יִבְצֹר׃
:מִהֶם כָּל אֶשֶׁר יִזְמוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת׃ (Gen 11:6)

⁵ Hebrew: "rūaḥ" (רוח); Aramaic: "rūḥā" (ܪܘܚܐ); The Greek "psychē" (ψυχή) does not have the meaning of "wind," but it can, on the other hand, mean "breath."

⁶ Text in brackets added.

⁷ Martin, Francis, ed. *Acts (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2006: 22. Print.

⁸ Ibid.: 22.

In modern times, many have considered that the tongues spoken at Pentecost and during the missionary journeys of the Apostles would merely be a form of glossolalia: random sounds pronounced under the influence of the Spirit, perhaps symbolizing unknown languages that no one would be able to understand. Followers of this interpretation reenact Pentecost by such glossolalia on command, considering each one of them a “gift of tongues” of the Holy Spirit. It would seem that even in St Paul’s days, problems arose because of misinterpretations of this concept. He therefore instructed the faithful concerning this matter in his first letter to the Corinthians:

One who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit . . . Now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how shall I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will any one know what is played? . . . There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning⁹; but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. . . . Therefore, he who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret . . . In the Law it is written, ‘By men of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.’ Thus, tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers . . . If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God. (1 Co 14:2–28,¹⁰ abridged)

⁹ The verse contains a play of words, only visible in the original Greek: “τοσαῦτα εἰ τύχοι γένη **φωνῶν** εἰσιν ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ οὐδὲν **ἄφωνον**” (emphasis added).

¹⁰ “ὁ γὰρ λαλῶν γλώσση οὐκ ἀνθρώποις λαλεῖ ἀλλὰ θεῷ• οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἀκούει, πνεύματι δὲ λαλεῖ μυστήρια• . . . Νῦν δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἐάν ἔλθω πρὸς ὑμᾶς γλώσσαις λαλῶν, τί ὑμᾶς ὠφελήσω ἐάν μὴ ὑμῖν λαλήσω ἢ ἐν ἀποκαλύψει ἢ ἐν γνώσει ἢ ἐν προφητείᾳ ἢ [ἐν] διδασχῇ; ὅμως τὰ ἄψυχα φωνὴν διδόντα, εἴτε αὐλὸς εἴτε κιθάρα, ἐάν

The gift of tongues would therefore not be mere glossolalia, but rather be a speech with a precise meaning, in a language unknown to the speaker. The gift nonetheless entails a capacity to understand the underlying message. S^t John Chrysostom tells us that the tongues are “real” languages: Persian, Indian, Latin etc.,¹¹ but the clearest rebuttal of the “glossolalists” is the description given by S^t Luke himself:

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,¹² Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. (Act 2:5–11¹³)

διαστολὴν τοῖς φθόγοις μὴ δῶ, πῶς γνωσθήσεται τὸ αὐλούμενον ἢ τὸ κιθαριζόμενον; . . . τοσαῦτα εἰ τύχοι γένη φωνῶν εἰσιν ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ οὐδὲν ἄφωνον• ἐὰν οὖν μὴ εἰδῶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς φωνῆς, ἔσομαι τῷ λαλοῦντι βάρβαρος καὶ ὁ λαλῶν ἐν ἐμοὶ βάρβαρος. . . . Διὸ ὁ λαλῶν γλώσση προσευχέσθω ἵνα διερμηνεύῃ . . . ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γέγραπται ὅτι ἐν ἑτερογλώσσοις καὶ ἐν χεῖλεσιν ἐτέρον λαλήσω τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ καὶ οὐδ’ οὕτως εἰσακούσονται μου, λέγει κύριος. ὥστε αἱ γλῶσσαι εἰς σημεῖόν εἰσιν οὐ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀπίστοις, ἡ δὲ προφητεία οὐ τοῖς ἀπίστοις ἀλλὰ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν . . . εἴτε γλώσση τις λαλεῖ, κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς καὶ ἀνὰ μέρος, καὶ εἰς διερμηνευέτω• ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἢ διερμηνευτής, σιγάτω ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἑαυτῷ δὲ λαλεῖτω καὶ τῷ θεῷ.” (1Co 14:2–28, abridged).

¹¹ Schaff, Philip. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series, Volume XII St. Chrysostom*. New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007: 168. Print.

¹² All the assembly was composed of Jews. It included proselytes, which are converts and therefore also Jews.

¹³ “Ἦσαν δὲ εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ κατοικοῦντες Ἰουδαῖοι, ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔθνους τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν. γενομένης δὲ τῆς φωνῆς συνήλθεν τὸ πλῆθος καὶ συνεχύθη, ὅτι ἤκουον εἰς ἕκαστος τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ λαλούντων αὐτῶν. ἐξίσταντο δὲ καὶ ἐθαύμαζον λέγοντες• οὐχ ἰδοὺ ἅπαντες οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ λαλοῦντες Γαλιλαῖοι; καὶ πῶς ἡμεῖς ἀκούομεν ἕκαστος τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ ἡμῶν ἐν ᾗ ἐγεννήθημεν; Πάρθοι καὶ Μῆδοι καὶ Ἑλαμίται καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν, Ἰουδαίαν τε καὶ Καππαδοκίαν, Πόντον καὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν, Φρυγίαν τε καὶ Παμφυλίαν, Αἴγυπτον καὶ τὰ μέρη τῆς Λιβύης τῆς κατὰ Κυρήνην, καὶ οἱ ἐπιδημοῦντες Ῥωμαῖοι, Ἰουδαῖοι τε καὶ προσήλυτοι, Κρήτες καὶ Ἀραβες, ἀκούομεν λαλούντων αὐτῶν ταῖς ἡμετέραις

Jews who were living abroad in various lands and came to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover witnessed this miraculous event during which they all heard the “mighty works of God” in their own language.

The exact nature of the message delivered through the gift of tongues is unknown, but it can reasonably be assumed that it would have been a first proclamation of the Gospel to the Jews, or perhaps the announcement of the building of the Church, marking the beginning of the missionary journeys of the Apostles, who would then be scattered across the earth and bring the Good News to all peoples. The gift was not restricted to the Apostles. It was also given to all the congregation, one hundred and twenty persons, as St Augustine tells us.¹⁴ The language spoken that day by each Apostle may have been one of the languages of their future mission field, a language that they would have to learn in the future, being then able to remember back the day of the Pentecost, and the message they delivered in this once “strange tongue,” although this is pure conjecture. Following this, St Peter, the stone upon which the Church would be built, proclaims his interpretation of these events: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Act 2:38¹⁵). Thus begins the proclamation of the Good News to the Jews.

The Venerable Bede sees in these events the sign that “the church’s humility recovers the unity of languages that the pride of Babylon had shattered.”¹⁶ St Cyril of Jerusalem also considers it a “recovery” from the confusion of tongues,¹⁷ but the parallel with this other event may nevertheless not be as simple as it seems. In Babel, God said: “Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech” (Gen 11:7¹⁸). In Jerusalem, the confusion is not undone. The

γλώσσας τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ.” (Act 2:5–11).

¹⁴ Schaff, Philip. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers First Series, St. Augustine: Gospel of John, First Epistle of John, Soliloquies*. New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007: 363. Print.

¹⁵ “Πέτρος δὲ πρὸς αὐτοὺς• μετανοήσατε, [φησίν,] καὶ βαπτισθῆτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν καὶ λήμψεσθε τὴν δωρεάν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος.” (Act 2:38).

¹⁶ Martin, Francis, ed. *Acts (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2006: 23. Print.

¹⁷ Ibid.: 24.

¹⁸ “הָבָה נִרְדָּה וְנִבְלָה שָׁם שְׂפָתָם אִשָּׁר לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אִישׁ שְׂפַת רֵעֵהוּ:” (Gen 11:7).

diversity of languages still exists, and the people gathered there are still not able to understand every other person. Here, it is the people that are confused rather than the languages themselves. They are confused because they understand what was spoken to them, whereas in Babel their tongue was confused so that they would not understand each other. It is not a reversal of Babel, nor a recovery from it, because to consider the confusion of tongue as a “disease” would be to ignore its hermeneutical purpose and its ek-static nature.

The tongues of fire therefore do not reverse Babel, but rather announce the possibility of overcoming the division that resulted from it. This division came because the Babelites had an evil purpose. The piety of the men gathered around the Apostles nonetheless do not constitute a reunification of the different peoples of the earth, as only one people, the Jews, is indeed present! As the Greek Orthodox liturgy of the time says, it is foremost a “call to unity,” so that “with one voice we glorify the All-holy Spirit.”¹⁹ It is therefore only a call and not the realization of this unity. This unity will require the work of men, the building of the Church that shall reach the heavens, not for the glory of the builders’ name as in Babel, but rather for the glory of God’s name.

S^t Luke’s account mentions that the actors and spectators of the Pentecost were Jewish either by birth or by conversion. As when the Israelites received the Law in Sinai, Gentiles had no part in it. However, as Daniel would later share the invitation to worship the “one true God” with the nations of the Babylonian empire, those who received the gift of the spirit would soon share it with all the nations of Earth. Daniel came seven centuries after the giving of the Law, but the gift of the spirit to the Gentiles would be considerably quicker: only a few years.

One day, a Roman centurion living in Jaffa, a devout, God-fearing man, generous toward those in need, received a vision commanding him to send for S^t Peter, so that the Apostle would come to his house in Caesarea. While the centurion’s men were approaching the city, S^t Peter was about to eat when he fell into a

¹⁹ “Ότε καταβὰς τὰς γλώσσας συνέχεε, διεμέριζεν ἔθνη ὁ Ὑψιστος, ὅτε τοῦ πυρὸς τὰς γλώσσας διένειμεν, εἰς ἐνότητα πάντας ἐκάλεσε, καὶ συμφώνως δοξάζομεν τὸ πανάγιον Πνεῦμα.” From: “ΤΩ ΣΑΒΒΑΤΩ ΜΕΤΑ ΤΗΝ ΠΕΝΤΗΚΟΣΤΗΝ” *Ελληνικά λειτουργικά κείμενα της ορθόδοξης εκκλησίας*. Web. 4 Apr. 2016.

trance (ἐγένετο ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἔκστασις [ékstasis],²⁰ emphasis added), and also received a vision:

[Peter] “saw the heaven opened, and something descending, like a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” But Peter said, “No, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has cleansed, you must not call common.” (Act 10:11–15²¹)

Following this, S^t Peter received the men of Cornelius the centurion, and they all departed toward Jaffa. After meeting Cornelius, S^t Peter tells him that according to the Law of Moses, Jews should not associate themselves or eat with Gentiles, but that he nonetheless received a vision telling him that the distinction between pure and impure foods do not need to be observed anymore. The Old Covenant made in Sinai with the Hebrews has indeed been fulfilled by the cross, and S^t Peter thus perceives that “God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him” (Act 10:34–35). While S^t Peter was still preaching the Good News to the congregation gathered in the house of Cornelius, the Holy Spirit then fell on all who heard his words:

And the believers from among the circumcised who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, “Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.” (Act 10:45–

²⁰ The Syriac Peshitta interprets as: “fell into a stupor” (ܠܚܬܝܬܐ ܕܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܠܚܝܬܐ).

²¹ “καὶ θεωρεῖ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγμένον καὶ καταβαῖνον σκευὸς τι ὡς ὀθόνην μεγάλην τέσσαρσιν ἀρχαῖς καθιέμενον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἐν ᾗ ὑπῆρχεν πάντα τὰ τετράποδα καὶ ἐρπετὰ τῆς γῆς καὶ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. καὶ ἐγένετο φωνὴ πρὸς αὐτόν• ἀναστάς, Πέτρε, θύσον καὶ φάγε. ὁ δὲ Πέτρος εἶπεν• μηδαμῶς, κύριε, ὅτι οὐδέποτε ἔφαγον πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ ἀκάθαρτον. καὶ φωνὴ πάλιν ἐκ δευτέρου πρὸς αὐτόν• ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἐκαθάρισεν, σὺ μὴ κοῖνου.” (Act 10:11–15).

48²²)

The baptizing of Gentiles had considerable implications, and even S^t Peter could have been hesitant to proceed. This is why, as the Venerable Bede tells us,²³ the Spirit is poured upon the Gentile believers before the Apostle has finished talking, and before they were baptized! This inversion between the sacrament and what would normally be its effect is precisely the sign that baptism cannot possibly be refused to Gentiles, as Peter tells us.

In Jerusalem, the Spirit came upon the Jewish Apostles and the believers. In Caesarea, it came upon Jews and Gentiles alike, marking the true beginning of the New Alliance between God and all the peoples of Earth, and the building of the “one holy catholic and apostolic Church”²⁴ founded upon S^t Peter. The transition from a world separated between Jews and Gentiles to one united by the Word is smooth, but it nonetheless takes time to be recognized. Following the event of Caesarea, the matter of the observance of the laws of Moses would later be debated at the Council of Jerusalem (Act 15), as some of the Apostles were outraged by the welcoming of Gentiles and the abandon of the Jewish dietary restrictions. This barrier between peoples is progressively abolished, but it nonetheless is never more clearly seen than during the baptizing of Cornelius and his companions. S^t John Chrysostom considered that the coming of the Word marked this transition: “Gentiles? What Gentiles now? They were no longer Gentiles, the Truth having come.”²⁵ S^t Peter and the Apostles would nonetheless still continue to use the word for some time, struggling to interpret the implications of this universalization of the Alliance and reluctant to leave behind the laws of Moses, the symbol of their religious orthodoxy when they preached to their own people.

²² “καὶ ἐξέστησαν οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς πιστοὶ ὅσοι συνῆλθαν τῷ Πέτρῳ, ὅτι καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἢ δῶρεα τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐκκέχρυται· ἤκουον γὰρ αὐτῶν λαλούντων γλώσσαις καὶ μεγαλυνόντων τὸν θεόν. τότε ἀπεκρίθη Πέτρος· μήτι τὸ ὕδωρ δύναται κολῦσαι τις τοῦ μὴ βαπτισθῆναι τούτους, οἵτινες τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔλαβον ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς; προσέταξεν δὲ αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ βαπτισθῆναι.” (Act 10:45–1).

²³ Martin, Francis, ed. *Acts (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2006: 139. Print.

²⁴ From the Nicene Creed: “μίαν, ἁγίαν, καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν.”

²⁵ Martin, Francis, ed. *Acts (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2006: 140. Print.

During the outpouring of the Spirit, the believers once again spoke in tongues and prophesized. Details concerning this event are even scarcer here than in the account of Pentecost, but the narrative nonetheless tells us that this sign would continue to appear during the Apostles' missionary journeys. This sign would then slowly fade away, being rendered superfluous as the Church developed, as S^t Severus of Antioch tells us: "With the faith spread far and wide, there is no need of signs, for what comes from God is not for show but for the salvation, healing and benefit of those who receive."²⁶ Salvation does not come from words but from the Word, who grants "forgiveness of sins through his name" with baptism, and whose name means "salvation" (יְשׁוּעַ [yēšūaʿ]), both in the Hebrew language and in man's life.

6.2 The meta-narrative of language in the Pentecost episode

As shown by the exegesis of the narrative that was developed in the previous pages, the Pentecost is mainly presented by the narrative as the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, which descends onto a group of faithful and gives them the gift of tongues. This is what most readers of the narrative keep in mind concerning this event, and perhaps rightfully so. It will nonetheless be argued here that the same event also represents a shift of linguistic paradigm, that is, a change of status of language, and that it thus forms a key part of the (hi)story of language in the narrative, affecting the very core of man's being. In the meta-narrative of language that will be unveiled here, the Pentecost will mark the beginning of a process of universalization of the revealed law, and a generalization of contacts and tensions between the houses composing the village of being. More than a punctual miracle, as great as it may be, this event represents a critical moment in the (hi)story of language, one where the separation of mankind into different peoples at Babel takes its full meaning, and one that forms the last "linguistic" stepping-stone given to mankind before the end of days. It will constitute the ultimate transformation of the dwelling allowing man's being, a dwelling that is meant to guide him before the time of judgment that will soon come to mankind as a whole.

²⁶ Ibid.: 140.

As the Bible also intends to address the reader and reflect his world, this *ek-stasis* also occupies a particular place within the meta-narrative. The reader is indeed meant to be directly concerned by this *ek-stasis*, perhaps more than by the others, because it is directly addressed to the men of his time. The present-day reader is indeed located in the time between the Pentecost narrative and the last event that will be the subject of the next chapter. The stat-ion of language that will be presented here is therefore the one in which the reader is plunged, according to the narrative's own vision. Furthermore, it is within the context of the Pentecost *ek-stasis* that the narrative itself will take its final form: the four Gospels, the Epistles and the Book of Revelation, all forming the "New Testament," will all be written down following the missionary impulse initiated by the descent of the spirit on the Apostles. The prophetic nature of the narrative, however, implies that future times, the final days in particular, are still recounted by the narrative, but the ink of the Scriptures nonetheless dries after Pentecost.

The story is then complete, even though it only constitutes a brief outline of the history of the men of the narrative's universe. According to the meta-narrative, language, as it is now, is thus the result of the transformation operated through the Pentecost and its aftermath, which will transform the village of being into a city, forming a coherent whole. The unveiling of the significance of this event will now start with an assessment of language in the time immediately preceding it, so as to allow us to clearly see the context in which the Pentecost will occur.

6.2.1 Language before Pentecost

From the end of the Babylonian captivity until the time of the Apostles, the language of the men dwelling in the Holy Land has continued its slow mutation. The returning exiles, who represented the cultural and political elite of the Hebrews, have brought back the language of their captors to their homeland, a language that largely replaced the Adamic language as the mother tongue of the people, as exemplified by the fact that the Gospels contain several Aramaic quotes uttered by the Christ himself.²⁷ This

²⁷ Mar 5:41, for example.

means that the Hebrews of the centuries following the captivity have progressively left the Adamic house, their ancestral home and their custody, in order to make the house of Aram their new home. This nonetheless does not imply that the house of Adam will be deserted. It will indeed continue to be a home for some of the custodians, a second home that will have to be learned and appropriated in order to become theirs. It will nevertheless also become a second dwelling for a portion of other peoples, and in particular, for those who dwell in the house of Aram within which a part of the divine law has been given to mankind as a whole in Babylon.

The house of Adam will therefore not only perdure: it will also become a temple for all nations. It will become a special dwelling that will not be given as a home from birth to any particular people, and rather be one that will gather all those who among all peoples responded to the call inviting them to re-flection, to tread on the path of thinking that will lead them to their essential being. This dwelling will be explored and inhabited only by those willing and able to appropriate the gift of the custodians, as their inheritance, fruit of an uninterrupted tradition flowing from the days of the first man.

From a simple living house of being among others in the village, the first house is now enshrined as an immutable testimony and it becomes a compass toward which all men can be united in re-flection toward their origin and their destiny. This new nature of the Adamic house is nonetheless not due to an inherent superiority over the other houses. Its nature as Temple does not make its building-blocks, its architecture, or even its builders more “sacred” than others. It is consecrated in the sense of a dedication or an offering to a cause, firstly because it is not living anymore, but rather a “dead” language, which can only be artificially revived by persons to whom it is only a secondary abode, and whose world is the divine law itself. In technical terms, the Hebrews know a “diglossia:”²⁸ they dwell in the house of Aram in their daily lives, but also have a second abode, one kept for a special purpose, the house of Adam, which will be the language of their faith, the Tem-

²⁸ Diglossias are a rather common phenomenon in the modern world: for example, most Arab countries speak vernacular dialects in their daily lives, but use a language based on Classical Arabic for more formal occasions, such as the writing of books or speeches.

ple of being dedicated to the Deity. Secondly, this Temple is also consecrated to the memory of the origin of mankind as a whole, as it was the dwelling of the first men. It is consecrated, not because the first men were more skillful builders or more virtuous men, but only because it represents the source of the being of their descendants, who populate the earth.

The Adamic house is therefore not “sacred.” It is not inherently superior, and it does not necessarily more accurately represent the Φύσις than any other house. It is only *consecrated*, a space dedicated to re-flection and containing a part of the Law guiding men on the path of thinking. The Law within this house almost fills its entirety, as all that is left of the original Adamic language survived exclusively through it, excepting for its “use” as a second language, which is seldom mentioned in the rest of the narrative itself.²⁹ At this point, however, the Adamic temple is not the only consecrated space. The house of Aram indeed also shelters a portion of the divine revelation. Contrary to the Temple, this second consecrated space only constitutes a small part of the house of Aram, which remains very much alive through the work of its millions of dwellers. It represents a rigid altar within it, one that should not be touched or transformed by the dwellers, but rather only be beheld and honored. These two houses thus have a special place within the village, each representing a beacon on the path of thinking, places that must be visited and known in order to find the destination of one’s being.

The inner nature of the two houses is nonetheless not the sole particularity differentiating them from the other dwellings within the village: they both are also the only houses mentioned in the narrative that are put in tension with one another. This link led the custodians to progressively abandon their custody, inducing a partial crumbling of the house of Adam, which then became reduced to the parts of the edifice that were supported by leather scrolls rather than by the spirit of living men. Reduced to the Law, and only visited rather than inhabited, man’s first dwelling is nonetheless preserved, and it remains in constant tension with the other house that shelters both the descendants of the custodians

²⁹ One of the rare references to the use of the Hebrew tongue in the New Testament narrative is Paul’s discourse to the Jews of Jerusalem in Act 22. The trilingual inscription placed on the cross would be another (See Luk 23:38, Joh 19:19–20).

and the group formed by the sons of Aram and the other peoples forming the Babylonian and Persian empires.

Between the aftermath of the Babylon event and the time preceding the Pentecost, the two houses thus have known a worldly transfer of population, which nonetheless differs from the earthly transfer that occurred during this period. Indeed, while the earthly exile of the custodians to Babylon was brought to an end with Cyrus' invasion of Babylon, leading to a return of a large part of the exiles, the worldly exile, on the other hand, does not end with their liberation. On the contrary, the captives themselves bring back with them the language of their captors, a language that will ultimately prevail and displace their own language as the mother tongue of the dwellers of their earthly homeland. The line uniting the two abodes nevertheless remains, and the altar of the house of Aram constitutes an invitation to visit the Adamic Temple. The Aramaic Law, given to all peoples, indeed urges them to contemplate and to appropriate the fullness of the revelation, whose core is in the house of the first men, and it urges them to walk further on the path of thinking.

At this point, the village of being is a mere aggregate of independent and isolated dwellings. In its center, however, the seed of something more has been planted: the Temple and the house of Aram are both in communication. They are united by a line, which makes them form something that is more than their sum. This seed will need to be bathed in the fire of the Pentecost in order to grow and ultimately give fruits, but for now, the unique line between the houses only allowed the transfer of dwellers, and the inhabitants on both sides have yet to realize the potential of this instrument. One should nonetheless keep in mind that the tension between houses entirely depends on an individual decision to learn and appropriate the foreign. Those who leaped when the choice of throwing a line between houses was presented to them remain secluded within a single house, and they will thus only be passive witnesses of the transformation of the village that will occur in the aftermath of the Pentecost. The line and its tension are nonetheless themselves the source of a new *lethe*, whose spell will only be broken by the fiery tongues which will descend on the Apostles.

6.2.2 *Lethe*: the invisible line

Ἀντίξουν συμφέρον.

Opposition brings together.

Heraclitus³⁰

In these seemingly simple words of Heraclitus, an echo of the nature of the *lethe* affecting the men of the Pentecostal time can be heard. By putting two houses in tension, man sees that they are different and what opposes them. The line also brings the two together, through the intermediacy of man, who can travel between them and make them his homes. The previous *lethe* was dispelled because of this capacity to travel and to witness with his own eyes a plurality of houses of being. The same fragment of the Ephesian philosopher continues with these words: ἐκ τῶν διαφερόντων καλλίστην ἁρμονίαν, “the fairest harmony springs from difference.”³¹ A *lethe* can only perdure when contrast, that is, when difference, is absent. The emergence of a second house broke the previous *lethe* with the appearance of a line thrown between the dwellings, allowing the difference between homes to be revealed to man. This unconcealment, however, is also self-concealing, as Heidegger would say. It is like a clearing in the wood that opens up a clear space but whose brightness further conceals the forest that lies beyond it.

Here, the line allows man to travel between houses and to gather them, but the nature of the line itself remains concealed. If man refuses to put the two houses in tension, he then cannot see the homeliness of his home and the worldliness of his world, but if he throws and maintains a line in tension between them, both their homeliness and worldliness will be unconcealed. In this case, there will only be a sole and unique line in his world, one that will constantly remain, unless he chooses to go back to a secluded life, prisoner of a single house and a single world. With only two dwellings, there is only one possible link between the two: Thus, only one difference between houses is visible at this point: the one

³⁰ TBA. Original Greek: Aristotle. *Aristotle, XIX, Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. H. Rackham. 2nd edition. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1934: 454. Print.

³¹ Original Greek: Ibid.: 454; English translation: Ibid.: 455.



Fig. 16 *The single line.*

separating the house of Adam from the house of Aram. Being permanent and uncontrasted, the “lineness” of the line therefore cannot be seen. The difference between the two houses and their two worlds is revealed, but the essence of this kind of difference is itself concealed.

What is the consequence of this *lethe* of the line? The line fulfills a purpose, even when it conceals itself, revealing homeliness and worldliness to man, and thereby profoundly changing his view of the world(s) that he dwells in. He can perceive that the difference between worlds raises the question of their ground, that is, the question of the determination of their truthfulness. What the self-concealing nature of the line prevents is the man’s realization of the power that he can potentially exert on the houses he travels to, and on the worlds they shelter. He can see the problem, but cannot see that he potentially also has the power to solve it. Perhaps more importantly, the *lethe* hides the fact that the line is not only thrown by man. The line itself is indeed part of him. Man himself is the line, what links the two houses and keeps them in tension.

From the days of the first man until the post-exilic times, man has always been a builder of the houses he dwelt. Traveling between houses has not impaired this ability. On the contrary, man knows how to contribute to the edification of the houses that he appropriates. What is clouded and that he has yet to realize is that his ability extends further: he could not only build individual houses, but also build between them, and thereby shape the architecture of the village as a whole. He could be more than a line-thrower. He could be a bridge-builder and the main architect of something greater than the present village. In order to come to realize this, man would nonetheless first need to perceive the fullness of the nature of the link that he can establish between dwellings. This would require that man see a contrast between different lines, a contrast between differences. This *lethe* began with

the apparition of the line itself, during the Babylonian episode, but the opportunity to dispel it will only appear centuries later, at a time when the Adamic house has already become a temple of being, dedicated to re-flection and to the Law.

6.2.3 Emergence: from line to bridges

The Pentecost marks the dawn of a new era, through the emergence of a new stat-ion of language that will broaden the horizon of man's world. This new stat-ion does not emerge as swiftly as the tongues of fire descend on the disciples. It is initiated by the miracle of the speaking in tongues, but it only represents the beginning of the emergence of the new stat-ion, which will be gradual, occurring slowly during the long period of time following the bestowal of the gift of the spirit.

6.2.3.1 The miracles: the wings of the Spirit

*Im Finstern wohnen
Die Adler und furchtlos gehn
Die Söhne der Alpen über
den Abgrund weg
Auf leichtgebauten Brücken.
Drum, da gehäuft sind rings
Die Gipfel der Zeit, und die
Liebsten
Nah wohnen, ermattend auf
Getrenntesten Bergen,
So gib unschuldig Wasser,
O Fittige [Flügel] gib uns,
treuesten Sinns
Hinüberzugehn und
wiederzukehrn.*

Eagles dwell
In darkness, and without fear
The sons of the Alps span the
abyss
On lightly built bridges.
Since the peaks of Time lie
Heaped around us
and those we love
Live near, languishing
On separate mountains,
Give us innocent waters
O give us wings so that,
faithful-minded,
We might cross over and back.

— Hölderlin, *Patmos*³²

³² Original German from: Hölderlin, Friedrich. *Hymns and Fragments*. Princeton University Press, 2016: 88. Print; English translation from: Ibid.: 89.

All starts in the “upper room” in the Holy City, when the disciples were gathered and an extra-ordinary event occurred: the descent of the Spirit and of tongues of fire, which caused them to “speak in tongues.” What does it mean in the meta-narrative of language, and the world of men? When men speak a particular language in the narrative, it means that they dwell in a particular house of being in the meta-narrative. In this case, “the spirit gave them utterance” (Act 2:4) and they spoke in tongues that were not “theirs,” which means that the Spirit *trans-ported* them, from the house of being that is their home, to another, which is not. It was seen in the previous chapter that in order to visit another house of being, one must first travel to it, that is, learn the language associated with it, and appropriate it. Here, however, no traveling or learning occurs. The Spirit instantaneously and effortlessly trans-ports, one might even say tele-ports, the disciples in order for them to temporarily visit a new dwelling.

Here, the Deity replies to the longing described in Hölderlin’s poem: riding on the wings of the Spirit, man can reach the isolated dwellings of other peoples, without building any bridge between them. Without the travel and the appropriation of the new house, however, men are blind and mute within it. The mere visitor does not see the readiness-to-hand of the house, and cannot “use” it to speak. This is why the fiery tongues and the spirit descend on them. The fire from heaven will shine within the strange building and give them light so that they can behold the interior of the house. The Holy Wind³³ will then be their voice, carrying their speech.

Among the bewildered multitude gathered around the disciples, many Jews from all regions of the earth heard them speaking in their own mother tongues. The disciples’ visit in an unknown dwelling was thus witnessed by strangers living in Jerusalem: different disciples were flown to other houses of the village, houses that were not linked in any way to their home. The miracle of Pentecost therefore represents an event in which men have been carried on the wings of the Spirit in order to visit the various houses of the village, houses which were isolated, cut off from one another, and in particular from the home of the disciples, the house of Aram

³³ The word “Holy Spirit” (רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ, [rūah haqqōdēš]) in Hebrew can also be read as “Holy Wind.”

harboring the altar of the Law, and from the Adamic Temple that shelters its core. This miracle nonetheless does not imply that lines are thrown between all these houses. It is only a sign, a vision given to the Apostles. It firstly is a vision of the village, but more than this, it perhaps also represents a vision of the task that lies ahead.

If the significance of the Pentecost was limited to a flight to distant houses, it would not occupy such an important place in both the earthly narrative and the worldly meta-narrative. To fly to and fro without the need to travel or to build is indeed a miracle, but it foremost marks the beginning of something larger, whose connection to the Pentecost is clear, albeit only indirectly hinted at in the narrative. The duality of this event can help us unveil the meaning of this episode: there is indeed not just one but two occurrences of a miraculous event where the Spirit descended and men collectively “spoke in tongues,” as seen in the previous exegesis of the text. The first exclusively concerned Jews, while the second was experienced by all peoples, Jews and Gentiles together. The origin of this separation may be found in the previous separation that occurred at Babel, that is, not the confusion of tongues, nor the scattering of the peoples, but rather the partition between custodians and pioneers.

After the confusions, each group was indeed given a mission. The custodians would preserve the house of Adam, while the pioneers would explore the earth and build new worlds. Following the appearance of literacy at Sinai and the progressive migration of the custodians to the house of Aram, the missions of both groups have been completed. The heritage of Adam has been preserved and it is now secured as a Temple, whereas the pioneers have filled the earth and have built the village of being that surrounds it. Exiled from the Temple, of which they now are only visitors rather than owners, the custodians were destined to form seeds scattered across the earth, among all the peoples who are now called to travel to the altar of the house of Aram, and who are invited to come as pilgrim to the Temple of Adam, that is, to reflect on and appropriate the Law.

At the time of the Pentecost, a part of the descendants of the custodians nonetheless refused to accept the fact that their mission had been fulfilled, and they went as far as spilling the

blood of the one sent to proclaim the new task given to mankind. It is in the aftermath of this tragedy that the first miracle occurs: some among the custodians, those who welcomed the Anointed one sent to them, are flown on the wings of the Spirit toward the houses that form the village, to the “peaks of time” that “lie heaped around,” fruit of the labor of generations of pioneers, who diligently fulfilled their assignment. Their visit will nonetheless only give them a brief glimpse of these worlds, as they are swiftly brought back to their home.

The meaning and purpose of this sight are not explicitly stated in the narrative. The context of this event can nonetheless shed some light on the matter. As this exploration on the wings of the Spirit is limited to the custodians, who are also the main followers of the Anointed One, it would seem natural to see in this sight of the village a reminder of the fact that they are called to be scattered and to travel to each house built by the pioneers. Since the time of the Babylonian episode, the custodians began their exile to one of these houses, the house of Aram, and the dwellers of this house were coincidentally called to honor the Deity in front of the altar in its midst, and in the Temple of Adam. Some were scattered across the village, as the narrative tells us that custodians speaking many different tongues were gathered in Jerusalem when the miracle occurred. The flight to the foreign now shows them a new task: to bring the worship of the one true Deity to the village, in its entirety. This event signals the true end of the task that was given to the custodians, as it gives them a new mission, which is not only to travel on the earth but also to bring a sight of the divine Law to the distant houses, showing their inhabitants a path to follow.

The second miracle of the Pentecost then only confirms the new mission of the former custodians, and it is also meant to join them with the former pioneers. Both groups will now become one and strive toward the same destination. This event is thus very similar to the first, with one major difference: a mixed group of Jews and Gentiles, custodians and pioneers, is now taken on the wings of the Spirit and brought to visit the distant parts of the village. This means that they are all given the task of uniting the village of being, which is at this point no more than a set of isolated dwellings, inhabited by peoples “languishing on separate mountains.” More than this, it also gives a new special mission to

the former pioneers: they are called to join the former custodians and the dwellers of the house of Aram in their appropriation of the altar and their pilgrimage to the Temple. Once these final missions are completed, the two groups will then become indistinguishable, forming a single humanity. Each people will conserve its specificities, but they will form a harmonious whole, which will be more than the sum of its parts, according to the words of Heraclitus: “ἐκ τῶν διαφερόντων καλλίστην ἁρμονίαν,” “The fairest harmony springs from difference.”³⁴ This difference arose in the aftermath of the construction of Babel, and it remains largely intact after Pentecost, showing that this event is not a “reversal” of the confusion of tongues, as it has often been called. This difference is indeed a precious gift that must be nurtured and protected, as it makes mankind’s view of the Φύσις clearer. It is what allows the “fairest harmony” to resonate in man’s world(s), and it thereby is also what offers him guidance for the unveiling and appropriation of his essential being.

The two miracles thus serve a single purpose, which is to proclaim the completion of the former mission of both the custodians and the pioneers, and to gather all the peoples so that they can strive to fulfill their new task. This task nonetheless comes almost as a riddle to the peoples. Men are given sight of the remote houses, with the implicit message ordering them to travel back by their own means to these distant dwellings, bringing the divine law and the path of thinking to their dwellers. It also incites these strange peoples to come contemplate the altar in the house of Aram and pay homage to the Deity in the Temple of Adam. The miraculous journey on the wings of the Spirit nonetheless did not show them the path to follow in order to accomplish this. They will thus have to clear a path themselves, but first, before even thinking about how to travel back to the distant houses, they must prepare what is to be brought to the foreign houses, and appropriate it themselves. The Living Word that was seen and heard by those receiving the Spirit at Pentecost has left no writing. The task of building the final parts of the Law is therefore entrusted to them. Only once the new Law is established can it be carried away to the remote worlds.

³⁴ Original Greek from: Aristotle. *Aristotle, XIX, Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. H. Rackham. 2nd edition. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1934: 454. Print; English translation: Ibid.: 455.

6.2.3.2 The third house, the third law

The part of the narrative that is usually called the “New Testament” or the “New Covenant” only begins to appear after the Pentecost. The narrative itself is almost silent concerning its genesis. The opening lines of several books clearly declare their authorship,³⁵ but no information is given concerning the writing process at their origin. Contrary to the Law of Moses, which forms a compendium presenting itself as the fruit of a direct revelation from the Deity, the New Testament narrative appears as the work of men, an inspired work, but one that is nonetheless less assertive, appearing more soft-spoken. The four Gospels indeed give four different points of view on the same events, with some elements that could appear to contradict each other. Far from being a deficiency, this could be seen as a recognition of the fact that the work of man’s hands will always betray the limits of mankind, and that the written word is the product of a particular world and worldview.

Therefore, in addition to the Temple of Adam and the altar within the house of Aram, the disciples now have to build something new. They have to create something that will reflect the Gospel of the Living Word, and will form the last part of the Law guiding men on the path. The narrative does not mention any of the reasons explaining why the builders of the new structure chose a different house for this work, but it was nonetheless received³⁶ and carved within the house of Yawan,³⁷ commonly called Greek. This choice of the house of Yawan is not an obvious one, as the main language of the Holy Land would seem to have been Aramaic during the Pentecostal times.³⁸ At the time, the sons of

³⁵ 1 Cor 1:1, Psa 4:1, Amo 1:1 etc.

³⁶ There has been some controversy concerning the original language of several books of the New Testament. This question is often related to the tensions between the Greek-Roman and the Semitic factions of Christianity, the latter often arguing for a “primacy” of Aramaic/Hebrew sources. It can be pointed out that even if the original text was indeed written in Greek, the Gospels themselves seem to indicate that Jesus preached in Aramaic, and that the written text would thus necessarily be a translation.

³⁷ According to the “Table of Nations” (See Gen 10), Yawan is one of the sons of Noah, who is traditionally considered as the forefather of the Greek people. The Hebrew name for the Greek is Yawan (יָוָן).

³⁸ The question of the language spoken by the population of the Holy Land at the time of the Gospel is still debated by scholars, but the Gospels

Yawan nonetheless had already left an imprint among the Jews, as recounted in the books of the Maccabees. The Greek Seleucid empire ruled over them for centuries, before they were replaced by the Romans. Thus, even though it is not stated directly in the narrative, it would seem obvious that many educated Jews would have been fluent in Greek. Furthermore, being the *lingua franca* of the region at the time, it would seem to be an ideal language if one is to bring the Law to the peoples dispersed across the earth.

The building of this new structure will take decades, and it will be the work of different disciples, who will each carve one of its parts, before it is finally assembled into a coherent whole. For some, if not most of these builders, the house of Yawan will only be a second home, one toward which they traveled and which they then appropriated. Some scholars take pleasure in pointing out what they deemed as a poor mastery of house by the visiting artists.³⁹ In doing so, they only demonstrate a failure to see that the roughness of the blocks composing this altar may itself be a sign of humility: firstly of the Apostles, who accepted this difficult task, and secondly of the Deity itself, which condescends to be clothed with our names, that is, condescends to dwell in a humble house of being made by the hands of men, as described by the Syrian poet:

ܠܚ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ
ܡܫܠܬܐ
ܕܡܫܠܬܐ ܕܡܫܠܬܐ ܕܡܫܠܬܐ
ܕܡܫܠܬܐ ܕܡܫܠܬܐ ܕܡܫܠܬܐ
ܕܡܫܠܬܐ ܕܡܫܠܬܐ ܕܡܫܠܬܐ

He put on the names of them
for our weakness's sake. Let
us know, that unless He had
put on the names that
belong to such things, it were
not possible for Him to speak
with us that were men. By
what was ours He
approached to us.⁴⁰

themselves contain numerous Aramaic quotes, often spoken by Jesus himself. See Mar 5:41, for example.

³⁹ Tuttle, Hudson. *Evolution of the God and Christ Ideas*. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Pub. Co., 1906: 46. Print.

⁴⁰ Translation from: Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847: 205. Print; Original Syriac from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen*

The house is humble, and its builders may not be the most skilled in their art, but it is in it and through these artists that the Deity deemed proper to reveal itself to future generations. When the new altar will have taken its final shape, it will be joined with the Temple of Adam and the altar of Aram, as a consecrated work of art, that is, as a divine law whose purpose is to guide man's walk on the path. The three consecrated works of language will then delimit a special place in the village of being. They will form a **Sanctuary**, a manifestation of the Holy which is, for now, restricted to only three houses of being.

The appearance of the third part of the divine law thus implies that in order to be able to contemplate its entirety, and to see the path it clears for man, one needs to be at-home in three different houses of being. The Sanctuary has a threefold nature. It is cleaved between three worlds, each sprouting from a different river, the fruit of a different tradition. The previous *ek-stasis*, the travel to the foreign, showed the emergence of a plurality of languages within man's world: he finally ventured outside his home; he traveled and appropriated another house of being. This event also opened the possibility of establishing tensions between houses, throwing lines that allow them to resonate with one another, making their difference shine and unconcealing the specificities of each world, and worldliness itself as well. This unveiling, however, could only occur once man had made two different houses his homes, as the creation of a tension requires the existence of at least two different points to which the line can be attached. It was also shown that such an unconcealment is nevertheless self-concealing: the tension of the line is what allows worldliness to be seen, but the tension itself remains concealed. Vision requires contrast, but with only one possible line, such contrast is absent, and the line's invisibility perdures. One could imagine that one sort of contrast could already be possible, one between the presence of the line and its absence, that is, between seclusion within one house and a tension between two of them. This would nonetheless not really be possible, as one cannot simply forget his second home as one activates a switch, and one thus cannot make the line disappear on command. Once the line is thrown, it would take a considerable time to waste away, and it cannot simply be cut. The line is thus

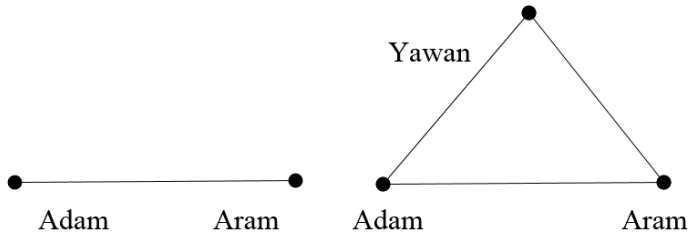


Fig. 17 *From two to three houses in tension.*

ineluctably hidden as long as no real contrast can be seen, but this is precisely what the Pentecost *ek-stasis* will bring.

The threefold nature of the Law, combined with the call to bring it to all the distant houses of the village, implies that some of those who are sent away will have to make the whole Sanctuary their home before their journey. They have to dwell in the three houses in which the Law is sheltered, something that represents a transformation of their world, and will induce an alteration of the architecture of the village. From an existence split between two houses and two worlds in tension, the men ready to embrace this new stat-ion are thrown into three houses, which become the nexuses of three tensions: This figure shows the distribution of the world of those who undertake to appropriate the fullness of the Sanctuary, and the lines keeping the houses in tension. At first glance, the transition may appear to be only a minor evolution, barely worthy of mention, or at least far less important than the emergence of a plurality of languages resulting from the appearance of a second home in man's world. Despite the appearances, this event nonetheless marks the advent of a new stat-ion of language. The mere addition of one house indeed induces the emergence of a plurality of lines and tensions, in some ways comparable to the emergence of the line resulting from the adjunction of a second house to man's world. With two houses, only one line is possible, whereas three houses allow the throwing of three different lines.

During the Pentecost episode, the appropriation of a triad of houses of being occurs with a specific goal and with particu-

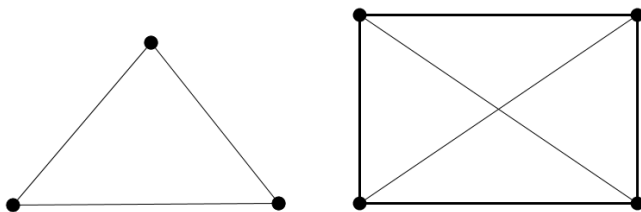


Fig. 18 *From three to four houses in tension.*

lar boundaries: its object is the divine law, which is cleaved in three different dwelling places. It forms an ideal example of the new linguistic paradigm, but it should nonetheless be noted that this paradigm is not restricted to the situation described by the Pentecost episode, nor does it only affect the disciples willing to undertake the mission, which is to bring this Law to the remote houses of the village. Indeed, the emergence of a plurality of lines and tensions is not directly tied to the fact that it occurs following the appropriation of the three particular houses forming the Sanctuary. By making any three houses of being his homes, man can become the source of such an emergence, which can thus naturally occur in different parts of the village, and across different periods of time. In the meta-narrative of Pentecost, this new station is for now reserved for a few men. It will then become potentially accessible to mankind as a whole in the future, provided that they are open and willing to learn the foreign, to make it their home, and do so more than once.

The threefold nature of the Sanctuary thus represents a key that opens up a new station to those who have walked the path between the three houses composing it and thrown lines to unite them while acknowledging their specificities. Here can the beauty of the Sanctuary's architecture also be witnessed, as three is the minimal number through which the plurality of tensions can be revealed, but it also is the maximum number through which one can walk a continuous circular path covering all the tensions, without overlap, as shown in the following figure:

This is not a mere topological curiosity. It means that the Sanctuary possesses an ideal shape for man to be walking con-

tinuously on the lanes linking the three houses, playing with the tensions as with a lyre. This is the life of the blessed man: “on his law he meditates day and night”⁴¹ (Psa 1:2), but the threefold nature of the Law implies that he must walk between the houses of the Sanctuary, and keep them in tension. The oneness of the path of thinking pointed out by the Law must be conciliated with its threefold nature. The three worlds indeed give man a different view of the oneness of the Φύσις, and thus man must relentlessly observe the differences between them. Here can the reason explaining why the Sanctuary is cleaved be seen, and why it is not in two, nor in four, but in exactly three houses: this threefold nature presents man with both the simplest and the most efficient path to appropriate the holy place. The diversity of tensions will nonetheless offer man more than an efficient way to continuously contemplate the Law. The new stat-ion is meant to unconceal something more, something that will have an even more profound effect on his progress on the path of thinking. The emergence of this new stat-ion nonetheless also comes together with another gift, the appearance of a new technique in the narrative, one that plays a key role in the unconcealment brought by this *ek-stasis*. Thus, before examining the result of the emergence of the new stat-ion, this new technique will first be presented and its place in the meta-narrative assessed.

⁴¹ וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה: (Psa 1:2).

6.2.4 A new technique: from lines to bridges

*Über Ströme hast du gesetzt
und Meere durchschwommen,
/ Über der Alpen Gebirg trug
dich der schwindligte Steg, /
Mich in der Nähe zu schaun
und meine Schöne zu
preisen, / Die der begeisterte
Ruf rühmt durch die
staunende Welt; / Und nun
stehst du vor mir, du darfst
mich Heilge berühren, / Aber
bist du mir jetzt näher, und
bin ich es dir?*

Thou hast crossed over
torrents, and swung through
wide-spreading ocean, / —
Over the chain of the Alps
dizzily bore thee the bridge,
/ That thou might'st see me
from near, and learn to value
my beauty, / Which the voice
of renown spreads through
the wandering world. / And
now before me thou standest,
canst touch my altar so holy,
/ — But art thou nearer to
me, or am I nearer to thee?

— Friedrich Schiller⁴²

Since the Babylonian episode, the men of the narrative have been able to travel between two houses and to establish a tension between them. It revealed the difference between the worlds sheltered by each dwelling, and this revelation in turn brought light to man's path of thinking. The two houses nonetheless remained separate, and the tension between them could only endure as long as the man throwing the line wished it. Without him, nothing would remain of this tension. It is a string whose vibration would only be heard for an instant, and then fall into oblivion, no matter how deep is its sound. The advent of the third and final part of the Sanctuary will change this situation, as the altar of the house of Yawan harbors a new technique that will allow man to do more with his travels than to simply establish tensions. He will now build bridges between houses, which will allow him to carry parts of his world into the foreign, and to bring back the foreign

⁴² English translation from: Schiller, Friedrich, and Alexander James William Morrison. *Poems of Schiller*. J. D. Williams, 1890: 247. Print; Original German from: Schiller, Friedrich. *Gedichte*. Grimme & Trömeļ, 1882: 264. Print. (Die Antike an den nordischen Wanderer).

into his homeworld as well, transforming both, and allowing these transformations to survive him.

Bridges thus are what allows **trans-lations** between languages. In the universe of the narrative, it can be inferred that translations necessarily occurred before the emergence of the third part of the Sanctuary, and that they are certainly as old as the first encounters between the speakers of different tongues. Translation in the narrative universe is mentioned in the former parts of the narrative,⁴³ but translation does not *occur in* the narrative itself before the construction of the altar of Yawan, in the following verse: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel’ (which means, God with us)” (Mat 1:23⁴⁴). This is the first occurrence, in the narrative, of an original sign present together with its translation. It is the first time that the narrative shows a transfer between two houses of being, that is, the carrying of a sign-block from one house to another, where this sign is integrated to the structure of the house in which it is taken. This event marks the beginning of a shift, from a simple tension between houses of being through the throwing of a line, to a tension accompanied with transfers through the building of bridges. Once again, a minute detail of the narrative has profound repercussions in the meta-narrative. The bridges will lead to a series of fundamental and permanent alterations of the architecture of the village of being. Before investigating these alterations, the nature of the new construction will first be uncovered.

The question raised in Schiller’s poem, “art thou nearer to me, or am I nearer to thee?” remarkably echoes with the nature of a bridge, as envisioned by Heidegger:

The bridge swings over the stream ‘with ease and power.’
It does not just connect banks that are already there.
The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses
the stream. The bridge designedly causes them to lie
across from each other. One side is set off against the
other by the bridge.⁴⁵

⁴³ Ezr 4:7.

⁴⁴ “ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ *Εμμανουήλ*, ὃ ἔστιν μεθερμηνεύόμενον μεθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός.” (Mat 1:23, emphasis added).

⁴⁵ Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2001: 150. Print; Original German: “Die Brücke schwingt sich »leicht

The bridge allows man to escape the enfolding power of the stream from which his home owes its existence, but it also gathers the two lands at its extremities. It “brings stream and bank and land into each other’s neighborhood,”⁴⁶ thus prompting a doubly positive answer to Schiller’s interrogation: the home is brought to the foreign, but the foreign is also equally brought to the home.

Furthermore, the bridge does not only gather pre-existing locations, it also “gathers to itself in its own way earth and sky, divinities and mortals. Gathering or assembly, by an ancient word of our language, is called ‘thing.’ The bridge is a thing.”⁴⁷ The building of the bridge creates a new location, where men will stand and from which they will see the world(s) around them: “the bridge does not first come to a location to stand in it; rather, a location comes into existence only by virtue of the bridge.”⁴⁸ This construction arises as the fruit of a long learning, a long travel toward the other bank, but its reward is on par with the efforts it demands. It gives man a way to extract himself from the stream that watered his house and his body, sustaining his life, but also shaping it according to a tradition, originating from a remote source.

The naked, “natural” man cannot resist the flow of the river, and he irremediably remains its slave, taken where it wills. The man who has mastered the Τέχνη can nonetheless use it to build and escape the fate of the slave of the Φύσις. Having built a bridge, he can take advantage of the benefits of the stream, for his own sustenance and the one of his house, without relinquishing a certain freedom from it. In the words of the German philosopher:

Resting upright in the stream’s bed, the bridge-piers bear the swing of the arches that leave the stream’s waters to run their course. The waters may wander on

und kräftig« über den Strom. Sie verbindet nicht nur schon vorhandene Ufer. Im Übergang der Brücke treten die Ufer erst als Ufer hervor. Die Brücke läßt sie eigens gegeneinander über liegen. Die andere Seite ist durch die Brücke gegen die eine abgesetzt.” From: GA 7: 154.

⁴⁶ Ibid.^t: 150; Original German: “Sie bringt Strom und Ufer und Land in die wechselseitige Nachbarschaft.” From: GA 7: 154.

⁴⁷ Ibid.^t: 151; Original German: “Die Brücke versammelt auf ihre Weise Erde und Himmel, die Göttlichen und die Sterblichen bei sich. Versammlung heißt nach einem alten Wort unserer Sprache »thing.«” From: GA 7: 155.

⁴⁸ Ibid.^t: 152; Original German: “die Brücke nicht erst an einen Ort hin zu stehen, sondern von der Brücke selbst her entsteht erst ein Ort.” From: GA 7: 156.

quiet and gay, the sky's floods from storm or thaw may shoot past the piers in torrential waves — the bridge is ready for the sky's weather and its fickle nature.⁴⁹

The bridge's power is in the strength of its piers, which let the river continue its course while allowing men to venture into new lands.



Fig. 19 *The bridge*. A bridge is unnatural, it stands out from the harmonious landscape that is a fruit of the Φύσις. It is made of earth, but it is foremost the product of man's word, the Τέχνη. A bridge is nevertheless what allows man to cross the natural barriers so that he can contemplate the manifold richness of nature. Bridges allow explorations and swift travels, thereby revealing contrasts between regions. Furthermore, bridges offer man the best possible view of the rivers: it is only when he is standing on the bridge, directly above the surface of the waters, that the riverbed and the depth of the waters, invisible from the banks, can appear.

Many of the aforementioned properties of the bridge could also be said to be shared with the line thrown between the houses. The line indeed also gathers the houses it links. It allows man to break free from the flow of the tradition of his home. This being

⁴⁹ Ibid.^t: 150; Original German: “Die Brückenpfeiler tragen, aufruhend im Strombett, den Schwung der Bogen, die den Wassern des Stromes ihre Bahn lassen. Mögen die Wasser ruhig und munter fortwandern, mögen die Fluten des Himmels beim Gewittersturm oder der Schneeschmelze in reißenden Wogen um die Pfeilerbogen schießen, die Brücke ist bereit für die Wetter des Himmels und deren wendisches Wesen.” From: GA 7: 154.

said, what the mere line does not allow, contrary to the bridge, is the carrying of sign-blocks, parts of a house of being, from one bank to another. The transition from the throwing of lines to the building of bridges is nonetheless rather arbitrary, as one who has the means to do the former would have the ability to do the latter. The differentiation between the two nevertheless occurs in the narrative: two houses of being are put in tension, long before the appearance of any trans-lation between them, that is, long before anything is carried over the streams, to another bank.

The first line appears with the first travel to the foreign, and the first homecoming. At this point, the tension between the houses leads to a comm-unication between the traveler and the dwellers of a new house. The bridge, however, only appears centuries after the first line, only once the three components of the Sanctuary are in place, and once the Law is ready to be carried to the rest of the village. It would seem that it is precisely because the bridges are meant to carry the Sanctuary over all the different rivers that are found across the land, and into the houses built by their streams, that they only appear once what is to be carried has been completed. Without the Law, translations certainly occurred before, but they were tainted by everydayness. They were translations that missed the profound nature of this technique, and which were only done for practical purposes. It would seem that this is why translation is only hinted at, rather than readily apparent in the narrative itself. The higher purpose of translation needed to be unveiled before it could appear. Thus, the nature of the bridge is to carry over to the foreign, supporting the weight of the transported sign-blocks while allowing men to escape the flow of their own tradition. The present section focused on the nature of the bridge, but now attention shall be paid to the action it permits, that is, trans-lation itself.

6.2.5 Carrying over the bridge: trans-lation

ܕܝܢܐ ܕܗܝ ܡܠܝܬܐ
 ܕܡܝܬܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

 ܕܝܢܐ ܕܗܝ ܡܠܝܬܐ
 ܕܡܝܬܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ
 ܕܡܝܬܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ
 ܕܡܝܬܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

I read the opening of this
 book
 and was filled with joy,

 The eye and the mind
 traveled over the lines
 as over a bridge,
 and entered together
 the story of Paradise.

— S^t Ephrem, *Hymns on Paradise* ⁵⁰

As said in the previous section, the opening chapter of the first book of the third part of the Sanctuary, called the “New Testament,” contains the first occurrence of trans-lation in the narrative, which can be seen as marking the first time a sign is carried between different houses of being, through a bridge. This first occurrence occurs in the following context:

. . . an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called *Emman’u-el*” (*which means, God with us*). (Mat 1:20–23, Emphasis added)⁵¹

⁵⁰ Original Syriac from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Paradiso und Contra Julianum*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1957: 16. Print; English translation from: Saint Ephrem. *Hymns on Paradise*. St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990: 103. Print. (Hymn V).

⁵¹ Original Greek: “ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου κατ’ ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ λέγων• Ἰωσήφ υἱὸς Δαβὶδ, μὴ φοβηθῆς παραλαβεῖν Μαρίαν τὴν γυναῖκά σου• τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου. τέξεται δὲ υἱόν, καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν• αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν. τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος• ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουὴλ, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευσόμενον μεθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός.”

This first inconspicuous occurrence of a translation is also a demonstration of its manifold nature, as it shows the transfer of a single sign-block from the house of Adam to the house of Yawan in two different ways: Ἐμμανουήλ [Emmanouél] (The proper name: “Emmanuel”), and μεθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός [meth hēmôn ho theós] (“God with us”).⁵² The first case may, in technical language, be considered a “transcription” rather than a “translation.” It may indeed not be a *translation*, but it certainly is a *trans-lation*: the result of the carrying of a sign-block to a foreign house. Here, the עִמָּנוּאֵל [‘imanu `el] sign of the Adamic Temple is trans-ported through a bridge to the house of Yawan, where it is reproduced and integrated to its architecture: it becomes part of it. This reproduction is nonetheless far from being a perfect image of the original, as its integration will demand that the new sign-block let itself be shaped by the architecture of its host. It will be constrained by the harmonious nature of the house, which prohibits arbitrary peculiarities that are not shared with the other signs. An example of such constraints is the absence of the “*cayin*” (ע) phoneme⁵³ in the house of Yawan, which is thus simply ignored.

These constraints also affect almost every aspect of this translation. Each original grapheme indeed needs to be replaced, and to every original phoneme the trans-lator needs to find the closest equivalent originating from the house of Yawan. The Greek epsilon (ε) serves as a substitute for the Hebrew hîreq (ה̄⁵⁴), despite the fact that both phonemes and graphemes are themselves not equivalent, thereby imprinting the style of the hosting house on the new sign. Such trans-lations can be compared to impressionist paintings of a photograph, where the original is still recognizable. Despite the fact that its appearance is profoundly affected by the painting style, effectively making it a new creation, the painting is nonetheless irremediably tied to its source. In this case, in particular, Ἐμμανουήλ becomes a mere name, referring to a specific person, and its original meaning remains concealed in the house of Yawan, as it cannot be de-composed into its elementary sign-

⁵² Mat 1:23.

⁵³ The “*cayin*” is a voiced pharyngeal fricative (/ʕ/), mostly found in Semitic language such as Hebrew or Aramaic. It is not historically attested in Indo-European languages.

⁵⁴ The hîreq is here accompanied with an *cayin*, as the vowel pointing cannot be written without a consonant as support.

blocks, which are closely linked to the architecture of the Adamic Temple. The first occurrence of a trans-lation in the narrative nonetheless also comes with a remedy to this fault.

The second way in which the original עִמָּנֵי אֵל [‘immānū ’ēl] sign is trans-lated is as an ex-planation rather than a trans-cription: μεθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός [meth hēmôn ho theós], “God with us.” In this case, when the original sign-block is taken to its destination. It is not integrated into the house but rather serves as a model for the creation of a new block. The shaping of this new sign will not be done according to the appearance of the original, as was the case in the previous example. Here, no attention will be paid to the outward appearance of the block, that is, its *signifier* component. What will here matter is what the block allows man to see, that is, what it *signifies*. In the first case, the appearance is what mattered. It was thus preserved relatively adequately, while its original signification was simply abandoned. In the second case, the opposite occurs: the appearance of the block is ignored, while its signification is considered paramount. The new sign is intended to give the dwellers of the house the same vision as the original sign did, through the creation of a block using other elementary signs of the house of Yawan that would correspond to the elementary blocks of the original coming from the Adamic Temple. As in the previous case, the skills of the builder nonetheless do not prevent the inevitable: the imitation will still receive the imprint of the house within which it is built. The θεός [theós] (“God”) of the house of Yawan is not perfectly equivalent to the אֵל [’ēl] (“God”) of the Adamic Temple, as each one of these sign-blocks is tied to the rest of the house from which it originates. It is tied to a tradition, a history, a people, and it thus cannot be carried over to the foreign in its entirety.

The two sides of the first occurrence of trans-lation within the narrative remarkably illustrate its challenges. This first use of a bridge nonetheless only gives us a small glimpse of both its possibilities and difficulties. Trans-lation will play a key role, together with the emergence of the plurality of bridges, for the completion of the mission given to the believers at Pentecost, which is itself part of the Deity’s plan to guide man on the path of his destiny. This seemingly trivial activity, the trans-port of sign-blocks from house to house within the village, will radically affect mankind as

a whole, and reshape its world(s). In order to perceive the true nature of this transformation, one must nonetheless first peer a little further into the essence of this action.

One of the surest paths allowing us to unveil the nature of trans-lation is to look at the different linguistic traditions that have carried this concept, embedded in their languages, across the earth from its origin. Unsurprisingly, in many of these traditions, the word for trans-lation is tied with the idea of carrying something over, as it is the case with the Russian word *nepe-æedume* (“to carry across”), or the Latin *trans-latio* (“to bring across”). Other languages give us complementary views: the closest equivalent in Lithuanian, *iš-versti*, is centered on the idea of “flipping over,” as if original and translation were the two sides of a coin or a piece of paper. This idea can also be found in the Chinese word 翻譯 [*fān yì*], whose first element also implies a flipping over. The Chinese ideogram nonetheless also implies of more peculiar meaning: the flapping of a bird’s wings, 羽 [*yǔ*]. Finally, the Icelandic *þýða* gives us another trail to explore, as it unites the meaning of “to signify” and “to translate,” and it can also express the notion of “attachment” and “love” between people.⁵⁵

Each one of these traditions has something to teach us, and they all can help us refine the description of the meta-narrative of language so that we can avoid mis-representations and shed light on overlooked elements. The link between trans-lation and over-turning can lead us to recognize that original, translation, and the two houses sheltering them, can all be the object of a gestalt switch. As if flipping a coin, man can indeed switch between original and translation, and he can switch between houses of being, a peculiarity that is not easily perceived while seeing translation as the carrying of a sign-block from one house to another. This view nevertheless also comes with its own limitations. It would indeed seem to imply that original and translation are merely two sides of the same “thing.” This would seem to imply the sort of “semiotic transcendence” that is fundamentally incompatible with the concept of seeing language as a “house of being.” Indeed, the key idea of Heidegger’s conception is that language is something we dwell in, and that man’s being is intertwined with the existence

⁵⁵ Zoëga, Geir T. *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2011. Print.

of this house, which gives him a world. According to this conception, language is not a mere coding scheme for the representation of transcendent, extra-linguistic “thoughts.” Language is what allows us to have a world and think in the first place, rather than the other way around. Thus, language cannot be an “object” to man, and an original sign cannot be one with its trans-lation, as a two-faced coin, because the two signs are tied to two different houses of being, which allow their existence.

The link between trans-lation and the wings of a bird may appear as just a fortunate coincidence within the context of this chapter, with the Spirit taking the form of a dove in the narrative, later descending upon the disciples who will be called to bring the Sanctuary to the foreign. The link may nevertheless also be seen as a hint at something deeper. The flapping of a bird’s wings, contrary to the flipping of a coin, must indeed occur as a series discontinuous movement, exhibiting a need for alternation and contrast. In order for the bird to remain in the air, two movements are required, and each one of them must occur in succession so that the creature can escape the earth’s pull. How is this related to the nature of trans-lation? Original and translation each represent one side of the wings, but the hint here concerns the flapping rather than the wings themselves. It does not point out what is translated itself, nor the trans-lation process, but rather what is to be done once this process is achieved. The trans-lation is the wings, but the flapping is what they are meant to do, that is, raising the bird in the sky, making him depart from the earth. The flapping is an alternation of both movements, and in the case of trans-lation it will be a contrast, a gestalt switch, between original and trans-lation. The result of this contrast will be discussed in the later part of this chapter, when the consequences of the unconcealment brought by the current *ek-stasis* will be examined. For now, it suffices to see that from this linguistic tradition we can find a clue indicating that trans-lation itself may have a greater purpose: it is not an end in itself, nor a mere tool for the conversion or transportation of signs between houses.

The Icelandic identification of “translation” with “signification” can also help us to point out the fact that every act of language is akin to a manipulation and a carrying of sign-blocks, within a single house rather than across different ones. The insight embedded in this old tradition has also been explicitly explicated

by modern philosophers, among which is Heidegger, who saw that:

What we fail to recognize ... is that we are also already constantly translating our own language, our native tongue, into its genuine word. To speak and to say is in itself a translation, the essence of which can by no means be divided without remainder into those situations where the translating and translated words belong to different languages. In every dialogue and in every soliloquy an original translating holds sway.⁵⁶

This implies that trans-lation can be seen as already occurring within a single house of being, as its dwellers inhabit different parts of it, and each one of them has a personal worldview that is never completely shared with other men.

Men standing in different corners of a house indeed each have a different view of it. The act of building the house itself implies a trans-lation of signs, not in the sense of an encoding of discourses into a different language, but rather in the sense of a carrying of a sign-block to another human being so that the sight of what it signifies can be shared. The bridges allow an extension of this phenomenon, by permitting the trans-port of signs across houses, and not only within a single abode. The origin of the Icelandic term *þýða*, the result of the conflating of “people” and “kindness,” can then be seen as confirming the solidity of the basis of this view of trans-lation: to trans-late is fundamentally a gift, a kindness toward another human being. Trans-lations are always performed with the intent of sharing signs, whether it be within one house of being or across the village. They are an essential part of what it means to build a house of being, and the fact that trans-lation is a phenomenon that will now be found beyond the houses’ threshold, in the village as a whole, shows that the Pentecost will mark the beginning of the edification of something new. Bringing houses “in the same neighborhood,” and allowing trans-fers between them,

⁵⁶ Heidegger, Martin. *Parmenides*. Trans. Andre Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998: 12. Print; Original German: “Wir verkennen jedoch, daß wir ständig auch schon unsere eigene Sprache, die Muttersprache, in ihr eigenes Wort übersetzen. Sprechen und Sagen ist in sich ein übersetzen, dessen Wesen keineswegs darin aufgehen kann, daß das übersetzende und das übersetzte Wort verschiedenen Sprachen angehören. In jedem Gespräch und Selbstgespräch waltet ein ursprüngliches übersetzen,” from: GA 54: 17.

the bridges will transform the nature of the village, as man's ability to build will not be limited to the confines of his home anymore, but rather be extended to all places where a world is to be found, where a house of being stands. In order for this to happen, this wave of trans-lations has to occur in conjunction with another kind of bridge: the bridging of stat-ions, which will now be examined.

6.2.6 Unconcealment: Ascent

ܢܡܕܝܢ ܚܕ ܚܩܩܡ ܠܚܝܟ ܕܚܕ ܠܬܝܡ

Praise we with all our
mouths the Lord of all
tongues!

— Saint Ephrem, *Hymns on Faith*⁵⁷

The new technique that appears soon after Pentecost and that has been the subject of the previous pages comes at a precise moment in the meta-narrative: it is simultaneous with the emergence of a new stat-ion. What emerges is a plurality of tensions between houses, which finds its origin in the fact that the Sanctuary is cleaved across three different dwellings, thereby inciting men to make these three houses three of their homes. The new technique also transforms the nature of the tensions between houses, from a single line to bridges, that is, from a mere comparison between two abodes to a full range of contacts and ex-changes between all the houses of the village. The two facets of the emergence will nonetheless be intertwined, as the unconcealment resulting from the plurality of tensions will require the use of bridges in order to be completed.

As with the other *ek-stases*, this unconcealment will not come freely and effortlessly. Not all men will be able to see what is concealed by the plurality of bridges. Some may try and fail, and

⁵⁷ Translation from: Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847: 183. Print; Original Syriac from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1961: 85. Print.

many will not even try, blind to the benefit of its vision. Once again, the unconcealment will come to those whose resoluteness pushed them to see the choice that is given to them: either to leap between stat-ions, or to bridge them. The bridging of stat-ions, however, does not occur on the same level as the bridging of houses in the meta-narrative. The nature of the two types of bridges nonetheless remains somewhat similar. Here, the two types of bridges will resonate with each other, despite their differences, as the unconcealment brought on by the bridging of the stat-ions will coincide with the unconcealment brought on by the plurality of bridges between houses. This event will once again produce a chain reaction, and the primary unconcealment will only be the first spark that will lead to the ignition of a series of fires, each one larger than the other, fires that will enlighten man's world and guide him on the path of thinking.

The bridges, and their multiplicity, will only mark the beginning of a process that will constitute the ultimate attempt by the Deity to bring man to his destin-ation, before the last days. This is the final *ek-stasis*, and the final choice given to man concerning his relation to language. This hindmost de-cision probably is the most demanding, and it is also the hardest to perceive, as many will overlook the existence of the choice itself, due to its inconspicuousness. How many would indeed notice the new stat-ion itself? A mere plurality of worldly tensions! Furthermore, if few would notice the emergence of a plurality of bridges, even fewer would notice the contrast between the old stat-ion and the new, between a village with one bridge and one where there is three. High are the expectations of the Deity concerning this matter, and yet, no one will be refused the opportunity to see this contrast and to make the choice between the leap and the bridging.

6.2.6.1 The bridging of bridges, worlds, and laws

The threefold nature of the Sanctuary that is revealed after Pentecost does not by itself represent the new stat-ion. It rather only opens up the possibility for man to make it emerge. Indeed, no one is thrown into this new paradigm, as no one is thrown into a threefold world. Man rather has to make these three houses homes by himself. Those who experienced the miracles of Pentecost were

carried on the wings of the Spirit to one particular foreign house, but these miracles did not show them any threefold world. Thus, the men who have pulled themselves into the new paradigm did so by their work, throwing lines and building bridges between three houses, houses that do not necessarily need to be the three abodes where the Sanctuary is located. The new stat-ion requires a plurality of bridges, between any houses, and thus the opportunity to appropriate and bridge the stat-ions will be offered to all, regardless of the house in which they were brought up, and regardless of whether they have known the Sanctuary or not.

This nonetheless does not mean that the Sanctuary does not have a role to play in the unfolding of this last *ek-stasis*. On the contrary, we will see that it represents its cornerstone, and that while the new stat-ion does not require an appropriation of the Sanctuary, the final purpose of the Pentecost *ek-stasis* will be tightly intertwined with such an appropriation, as the fate of all men will ultimately be to encounter the Law, in its threefold nature.

The first choice thus occurs before the bridging itself, as the emergence of the stat-ion in each man's world is the result of an individual decision. The stat-ion itself would nonetheless be meaningless if the bridge-builder does not see the particularity of what he constructed, that is, the plurality of bridges. If there is only one bridge, man may walk on it all his life without seeing it in its entirety: he will see the path that he treads, but not the structure of the bridge itself, as he cannot step back from it.

With three bridges, on the other hand, man can stand on one of them and see the other two from afar. On the meta-narrative level, this implies that man put the bridges themselves in tension with each other. The emergence results in the apparition of tensions between three houses of being. The unconcealment nonetheless requires more. It demands the creation of secondary tensions: tensions between the tensions, that is, a tension between the bridges themselves. Such secondary tensions will be the natural outcome of the bridging of the two stat-ions, contrasting a village with a single bridge with one that harbors a plurality of them. The following figures illustrate this transition, first from paradigm to paradigm, and then to the product of their bridging:

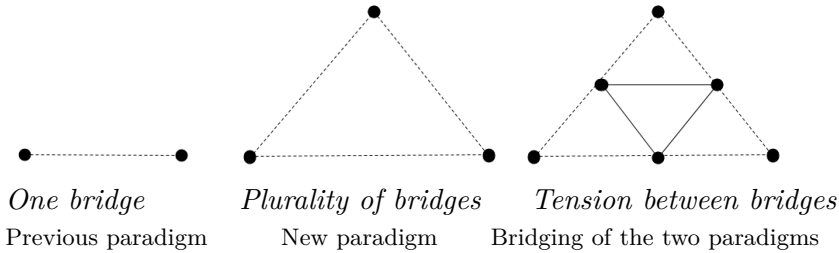


Fig. 20 *The bridging of paradigms and the bridging of bridges.*

The bridging on the stat-ion level induces the creation of tensions between the bridges on the meta-narrative level. Before then, the bridge between the two houses of the village was “used” by man, as he traveled between his two homes, but it always remained under the spell of a *lethe* that concealed the nature of the bridge to those who trod it. The plurality of bridges, together with man’s willingness to bridge the two stat-ions, cause the breaking of this *lethe*. The contrast between the two stat-ions reveals the nature of the bridges, in both their present-at-hand and ready-to-hand dimensions. The bridges are shown to be “things,” the product of man’s work, but they also show that man himself *is* the bridge. It is indeed his *logos* that allows tensions between different houses of being. It is his “reason,” part of himself, which is applied to the task of the bridging. This *logos* is nevertheless tightly intertwined with man’s home(s). It is a prerequisite for the building of a house of being, but the house of being is what gives the *logos* a space where its power can become manifest. The bridges, therefore, *are* man himself, but they also form an extension of one house of being into another, a construction that differs from the two houses at its extremities and yet unites them both.

In the present case, the present-at-hand nature of the bridge may nevertheless not be the most important of its aspects. Indeed, even though this present-at-hand nature is of primary importance for the perception of the bridge’s origin and essence, its purpose rather resides in its readiness-to-hand. It is a tool that allows man to gather the houses of the village, and allows the unconcealment of the **differences** between the worlds they shelter. Such differences are what was unconcealed in the previous *ek-stasis*: one line is

enough to uncover the difference between two worlds. This unconcealment was nonetheless self-concealing, needing a new *ek-stasis* in order for it to be unveiled. The difference between worlds was unveiled, but the nature of this kind of difference was concealed. Man could witness the difference between worlds, as a plurality of worlds was shown to him, but as there was only one difference, the essence of this difference was itself under the spell of a *lethe*. The plurality of bridges and the tension between them now induce the appearance of a plurality of differences, differences which can now themselves be put in tension. The perception of the purpose of this series of new tensions is nevertheless delicate, and it requires that we first peer further into the nature of the difference between houses and worlds.

Already at Babylon, man could witness that the house of Adam differed from the house of Aram, but what does this “differed” mean? Once again, the traditions embedded in various languages can shed some light on this matter. The most common tradition seems to associate difference with a cutting action: *Unterschied* in German, *Skirtumas* in Lithuanian, *Разница* in Russian, for example.⁵⁸ The houses firstly differ by their location. They are indeed cut off from one another, and they remain distinct even after the emergence of a line between them. The village is a set of separate dwellings, with most houses isolated from one another. Furthermore, a Chinese pictograph expressing the concept of “difference,” shows us another aspect: 異 [yì] represents a man wearing a mask on his face, thereby changing his outward appearance.⁵⁹ Another way in which the houses differ is indeed their appearance, that is, their architecture. Each one offers a different representation of the Φύσις, breaking down its oneness according to different cutting lines. The houses themselves are thus a source of differentiation from the Φύσις, but each house also differs from the others as well.

⁵⁸ This connection can also be found in non-Indo-European languages: for example, in the Arabic فرق *farrq*, or the Hebrew הִבְדִּיל *hibdil*, which are both also related to the idea of cutting and separation. The Hebrew term is derived from the word used at the beginning of Genesis, when the Deity “divided” the waters from the dry land, or “differentiated” them (See Gen 1:7).

⁵⁹ Primitive pictograph: 異 (Source: Sears, Richards. “Etymology.” *Chinese Etymology*. Web. 4 Mar 2016.)

The language of Socrates gives us a more peculiar insight: difference is Διαφορά [Dia-phorá], something “carried across.” The different houses are not only cut off from one another. They are also *distant*, having been *carried across* the land following the scattering in the aftermath of Babel. All these aspects are complementary. As Leibniz’s principle of the “Identity of Indiscernibles”⁶⁰ teaches us, in order for two houses to be different, some of their properties must differ, whether it be separation, appearance, distance, or all three together. A key aspect of the tension between the houses is the assessment of these properties, which constitutes a basis for their differentiation.

If there is only one line connecting two houses, there can only be one degree of difference in appearance and one distance between them. The assessment of these properties would indeed reveal the existence of a difference, but man’s attention would then be focused on the quantification of the difference, leaving the process of assessment itself, that is, the nature of differentiation, unseen and ignored. With three houses in tension comes the possibility of the assessment of three differences, and therefore the possibility of comparisons between differences. Man would not only put the houses in tension, but the tensions in tension as well.

As the bridge is formed by man’s *logos*, this nonetheless implies that the tension between differences constitutes an application of man’s *logos* to the study of itself, a bridging that unveils the nature of the bridge. A man dwelling in the three houses will thus be able to assess three differences, that is, be able to qualify the relatedness of the houses’ architectures, or be able to quantify their distance, for example. These three differences can now themselves become the object of an assessment, in the manner of differential calculus, which allows the establishment of a relationship between position, speed, and acceleration, as higher order derivatives, that is, as a **difference of differences**.⁶¹ The distances between the three houses can now be compared, revealing the fact that the three houses are differently related to one another; that their relative distance is not equal, or that their appearance can be more

⁶⁰ Leibniz, G. W. *Philosophical Papers and Letters: A Selection*. D. Reidel, 1969: 308. Print.

⁶¹ In mathematical physics, speed (v) is equal to the derivative of position (x), and acceleration (a) is equal to the derivative of speed: $v = \frac{dx}{dt}$; $a = \frac{dv}{dt} = \frac{d^2x}{dt^2}$.

or less similar.

The house of Aram is considerably closer to the house of Adam than to the house of Yawan. For example, on a sign-block level, the word designating the Deity in the house of Aram, אֱלֹהִים [ʾalāhā], is noticeably closer to its counterpart in the house of Adam, אֱלֹהִים [ʾēlōhīm], than to the one in the third house, θεός [theós]. The first two not only share a phonetic and graphic similarity. The place of the sign-blocks within the larger house is also similar, as both words are related to “strength” or “might,”⁶² whereas the third evokes a “manifestation,” tied to natural phenomena.⁶³ This is only a simple illustration of the unevenness of the differences between houses, which implies that the assessment of these differences will lead to a mapping of the bridged portions of the village. A **map**, drawn by man’s *logos*, will qualify and quantify the differences highlighted by the bridges, revealing the structure of the village. This structure can be contrasted with the relationship between individual sign-blocks within a single house and its architecture: connected differently to each other by the bridges and arrayed differently on the land, the village forms an “arch-architecture,” a meta-structure that encompasses the individual architectures of the houses.

The map can reveal this meta-structure to man, and give him a vision of its components: the houses, the bridges, and the differences themselves, which form a web connecting the houses. This should nevertheless not lead us to think that this structure is rigid, as even at this point, when the bridges have yet to be used to their full extent and are merely establishing tensions, the structure has more in common with a living organism than with a solid construction. Indeed, even when no ex-change between houses takes place, the web of differences is continuously changing, as it relies on the houses of being of the village, which possess an organic nature. The houses’ architectures are permanently evolving, as their dwellers relentlessly modify and extend them. Each new sign that is created within a house affects its architecture, in varying proportions, and these transformations, in turn, affect the web of differences, as new signs can reduce or extend the gap between

⁶² Pope, Marvin H. *El in the Ugaritic Texts*. Brill Archive, 1955: 17. Print.

⁶³ Anttila, Raimo. *Greek and Indo-European Etymology in Action: Proto-Indo-European *a?-*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 2000: 77. Print.

houses.

Furthermore, a creation of signs, signs that include almost every “use” of language, is not even necessary in order for the web of differences to be changed: the work of time alone would be enough to affect it. The timely nature of the houses indeed renders them prone to decay, as parts of them crumble when they lack the support of the dwellers, that is, when they are forgotten. Other signs become worn-out as they are transmitted across generations or across a large population, like when words are progressively mispronounced, often contracting them and thereby concealing their origin, ultimately blurring the links binding them with others within the house.⁶⁴ This process by itself causes the houses to become worn-out by the work of time, altering their architecture and thus the web of differences as well. Time can often act as a repulsive force between the houses, pushing them further apart from one another as it flows. The earth, however, will often have an opposite effect. Indeed, as the earth is the basis upon which all the houses are built, they are all pulled toward the ground, and they are brought together by the fact that all its dwellers share a large part of their experience of the earth.

The earth constrains parts of the houses, preventing them from drifting too much from one another. For example, the range of a sign’s audible signifiers is constrained by the limits of man’s audition and phonation organs, which are earthly parts of himself, and whose limitations are shared with almost every other man, no matter which part of the village they inhabit.⁶⁵ Because of these two opposite forces, the map representing the village and the tensions uniting it is ever-changing, pulsating like a living organism, with both houses and tensions in constant interaction with one another, even without formal ex-changes between the different dwellings. What the tensions between the tensions unconceals

⁶⁴ The hyphenation of common words that are composed of two or more basic words, used extensively by Heidegger and in the present work, can be seen as a way to counter this effect of time, by resisting the disappearance of the etymological link that reveals the origin of the word while clarifying its meaning. “Trans-lation” is one example.

⁶⁵ A house nevertheless can also progressively affect man’s earthly body, especially its audition. Even though all men would seem to be equally able to hear all the phonemes of all the languages of earth, this capacity erodes with time when it is not used. Learning foreign languages is thus considerably easier in infancy.

is this living map of the village, giving man sight of the *play of differences*.

The unconcealment of the *play of differences* between houses and worlds represents a crucial milestone on man's walk on the path of thinking, and in the (hi)story of language in the Bible as a whole. It is the central nexus of the Pentecost *ek-stasis*, representing the main outcome of the emergence and man decision's to bridge the stat-ions. It will, however, also be a starting point for further unveilings. One of the first signs of this *play* can be seen in the narrative itself, in the fiery tongues descending on the disciples at Pentecost. The Scriptures indeed declare that these tongues were not homogenous, but rather cloven (δια-μερίζω⁶⁶), literally "distributed across" in Greek. This "detail" is left unexplained, but we may see in it a sign of the *play*: after this miracle, the different tongues present in the village will become similar to trembling flames, cloven in two, with the Holy Wind stretching their extremities to make the tongues enter into contact with each other, forming bridges gathering the scattered houses of being. Like flames, the houses and the bridges are always in motion, but this motion is not controlled by anyone. The heat of the flames is indeed one of the sources of its own movement, but the Wind and the other flames surrounding them form another. This is why this phenomenon can be called a *play*, a term that Gadamer thus characterizes:

What is intended is to-and-fro movement that is not tied to any goal that would bring it to an end. Correlatively, the word "Spiel" originally meant "dance," . . . The movement of playing has no goal that brings it to an end; rather, it renews itself in constant repetition.⁶⁷

The play of differences is anterior to its unconcealment, and even

⁶⁶ Act 2:3.

⁶⁷ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2 Revised edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004: 104. Print; Original German: "Immer ist da das Hin und Her einer Bewegung gemeint, die an keinem Ziele festgemacht ist, an dem sie endet. Dem entspricht auch die ursprüngliche Bedeutung des Wortes Spiel als Tanz... Die Bewegung, die Spiel ist, hat kein Ziel, in dem sie endet, sondern erneuert sich in beständiger Wiederholung." From: Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gesammelte Werke: Band 1: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. A. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010: 109. Print.

anterior to the tensions between the houses themselves, but only now can man realize its existence. At this point, the play follows the flow of the Φύσις, and the differences are as eternal dancing flames, without purpose, and without end. Gadamer adds that “it is part of play that the movement is not only without goal or purpose but also without effort.”⁶⁸ Efforts require will, and this is the major element missing from the play of differences: not only is the play itself concealed, but the game that is played and its playing field are under the spell of a *lethe* as well.

The unconcealment of the play to the player will nonetheless fundamentally change his role in it. The map now gives him a vision of the nature of the game in which he is thrown, and especially of the fact that “all playing is a being-played”⁶⁹ and that “the game masters the players.”⁷⁰ Unable to perceive the play of differences, man could not take an active and conscious role in it, but its unconcealment gives him the means to resist the natural flow, to play the game and not simply let himself be played by it. The consciousness of the existence of the play is thus the first step toward its appropriation. The second is an act of will: “he expressly separates his playing behavior from his other behavior by wanting to play. But even within his readiness to play he makes a choice. He chooses this game rather than that.”⁷¹ The universe is full of games played together on overlapping fields, the play of differences being only one among others. Wanting to become a player, and not merely something played, man can begin to realize that although he remains one of the pawns on the playing field, he nonetheless has the power to willingly influence the game.

The *play of differences* can then become a *game of differences*, as man’s will cancels its “playful” nature. Indeed, it is now neither “without goal or purpose” nor “without effort.” The differences are

⁶⁸ Ibid.^t: 105. Original German: “Zum Spiel gehört, daß die Bewegung nicht nur ohne Zweck und Absicht, sondern auch ohne Anstrengung ist.” From: Ibid.^o: 110.

⁶⁹ Ibid.^t: 106. Original German: “Alles Spielen ist ein Gespielt-werden” From: Ibid.^o: 112.

⁷⁰ Ibid.^t: 106. Original German: “das Spiel über den Spielenden Herr wird” From: Ibid.^o: 112.

⁷¹ Ibid.^t: 107. Original German: “Er grenzt zunächst sein spielendes Verhalten ausdrücklich gegen sein sonstiges Verhalten dadurch ab, daß er spielen will. Aber auch innerhalb der Spielbereitschaft trifft er seine Wahl. Er wählt dieses und nicht jenes Spiel.” From: Ibid.^o: 112–113.

affected by modifications of the houses, and since man is among the dwellers and builders of at least one house, he thus possesses the power to willingly affect the play of differences. The vision offered to him by the map of differences makes him able to enter the game, as an active player, firstly through building. Doing so, man can then begin to influence the general structure of the village, redrawing the map as the transformation of his house(s) attracts or repulses the other houses, that is, as it increases or decreases the resemblance between the dwellings. To play exclusively through the building or re-shaping of houses is perfectly possible, but it is nonetheless somewhat impractical and inefficient. Individual houses can be transformed, thereby affecting the structure of the village, but without ex-changes between them, no coherent planning can occur, and man's entry into the game only produces insignificant and disorderly changes. What man lacks at this point is the possibility to affect the whole playing field, rather than only a few individual pawns. It is at this precise moment that the new technique that emerged with the new stat-ion shows its purpose.

The play of differences arises from the tensions between the houses of the village, but these tensions are supported by more than mere lines. Bridges indeed now connect part of the village, and they allow ex-changes between the houses to occur. This profoundly changes the game of differences, breaking the dams holding the rivers of tradition separate and making them flow into one another, as part of the natural play of differences. More importantly, man will now also be able to control these flows and to use them to accomplish his destiny. Equipped with mere lines, he could only reshape and move the houses from within, as someone attempting to move a box in which he is prisoner by balancing his weight against its walls, something that is as tiresome as it is inefficient.

The bridges, and the trans-lation of sign-blocks that they allow, nevertheless open up new possibilities. Man can now reshape houses through ex-changes with others, and he can bring them closer or farther directly, using bridges to pull or push them. Languages can thus become the source of the growth of other languages. Trans-lators can use other houses, which are home to them, as sources of inspiration for the building of different houses. The conjunction of the unconcealment of the play of differences, of man's mapping of the village and his entry into the game, with the appearance of bridges renders man ready to make the village

as a whole *his*, and ready to appropriate it and shape it according to his will. It should nonetheless not be forgotten that “the mode of being of play does not allow the player to behave toward play as if toward an object.”⁷²

Man may attempt to shape the village, but he will still continue to be shaped by all the houses of being that he inhabits. His *will* will therefore act as a compass, directing his work, but it is itself constrained by the houses that allow him to *be*. These constraints mainly originate from the work of his forefathers who built the house(s) that he dwells in. The game is thus not only played by the current dwellers of the house. It is also played across generations, across time as a whole, and every player is himself played in a bigger game, which encompasses the game of differences. As Friedrich Schlegel writes: “All the sacred games of art are only remote imitations of the infinite play of the world, the eternally self-creating work of art.”⁷³ The game of differences is assigned to man after Pentecost, and it is his responsibility to play and master it. This game is nonetheless only one element in the Φύσις, that is, “the eternally self-creating work of art” created by the Deity, which is the master of the larger game in which the play of differences is inserted. Even after man becomes an active player, he thus eternally remains a pawn of the game, but what gives him a special place among the other creatures of the game is the fact that he alone can become aware of his own place. He will now be able to shape the village according to his will, but what does he want? The bridger of stat-ions will ask himself this question, and certainly find in his heart words that resonate with these verses of the Lithuanian poet:

⁷² Ibid.^t: 103. Original German: “Die Seinsweise des Spieles ist also nicht von der Art, daß ein Subjekt da sein muß, das sich spielend verhält, so daß das Spiel gespielt wird.” From: Ibid.^o: 109.

⁷³ Ibid.^t: 105. Original German: “Alle heiligen Spiele der Kunst sind nur ferne Nachbildungen von dem unendlichen Spiele der Welt, dem ewig sich selbst bildenden Kunstwerk.” From: Ibid.^o: 111.

<i>Bet tu, o Viešpatie, man</i>	But you, O Lord, the path
<i>kelią</i>	You showed me, banned
<i>Parodęs, uždraudei sapnus,</i>	dreams, And I, having
<i>Ir aš, pažinęs šventą valią,</i>	learned the divine will, I go,
<i>Einu, Apveizdai paklusnus.</i>	obedient to the Providence. ⁷⁴

As a self-reflecting being, and one who is concerned with the question of his own being, man can decide to subserve his will to the will of his creator. The Deity has revealed its will at Pentecost and given man a mission to accomplish, which is to bring the Sanctuary to all corners of the village and to bring all the inhabitants of the remote houses to the Sanctuary. It is now the duty of the bridger of stations to submit to the Higher Will and to ensure that this mission is completed, uniting mankind with a bond to the Deity. This mission requires the presence of bridges between the Sanctuary and all the houses of the village. It also demands that man be already skilled in the art of translation, and this is why the mission can only be fulfilled once it becomes an established practice among the inhabitants of the village.

Furthermore, even though not all men will be willing, or even aware of the nature of the mission, bridges and translations will nonetheless appear in their houses. The emergence of translation in the narrative marks the recognition of its role in the fulfillment of the mission, but this technique was naturally already known in the narrative's universe. What changes with this *ek-stasis* is the awareness of its purpose, which is to change worlds. The game of differences is also a game of worlds, a competition between men to shape them paired with a free play of nearly random interactions. Man's consciousness of his power to play and not only be played by the game renders him capable of willingly channeling the flow of exchanges that transforms the worlds sheltered by the houses of the village. This, however, is not yet part of the mission given by the Deity, a fact that therefore raises the question of the direction that this transformation of the village is supposed to take. Before taking the Sanctuary to the remote worlds, bridges have to be built and exchanges must occur, but it will not be a smooth flow from

⁷⁴ TBA. Maironis. "Pavasario balsai." *Lietuvių klasikinės literatūros antologija*. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.

one empty vessel to another. Conflicts between worlds will indeed arise. Whirlpools in the flow of ex-changes will appear, and the bridger of stat-ions will be the commander of this clash of worlds, which represents another milestone on the path of thinking.

6.2.6.1.1 The clash of worlds

ܠܐ ܬܬܢ ܬܠܬ ܠܥܝܢ
ܠܥܝܢ ܕܩܠܐ ܕܡܚܒܬܐ ܕܬܠܡ

Let not thy tongue be a
bridge for sounds, which
letteth all words pass across
it.

— Saint Ephrem, *Hymns on Faith*⁷⁵

In this exhortation from the Syrian saint, we may perceive one of the dangers that man will face following the emergence of trans-lation. Like floodgates that prevented the flowing of traditions, the isolation of the houses of the village both preserved their diversity and limited their growth. Now, the newly built bridges not only allow men to escape the flow of the tradition associated with their home, but they also act as a network of aqueducts, opening the floodgates, and permitting the waters from different springs to encounter each other and to possibly be blended, to a certain extent. Water is a source of man's life, but it can nonetheless also bring death by drowning, and floods can destroy what he built, if the flow of the waters is left untamed. Such a taming is nevertheless possible to the man who is aware of the nature of the bridges. No matter whether any man is able to perceive the play of differences or not, the floodgates will nonetheless be opened, as trans-lation does not depend on it.

A play of worlds is therefore now inevitable. Ex-changes between the different houses of the village will induce trans-formations of their world. Never again will the village be a mere group of isolated dwellings, and it will now begin to form a single entity, where

⁷⁵ Translation from: Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847: 181. Print; Original Syriac from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem Des Syrsers Sermones de Fide*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1961: 83. Print.

each house contributes to the world of its neighbors, and in turn receives from them. Without the keen eye of the bridger, this process nonetheless remains a *play*, a “to-and-fro movement that is not tied to any goal that would bring it to an end.”⁷⁶ Without man’s conscious intervention, the floodgates are then left unattended, and the flow is uncontrolled. The floodgates can be left wide open and flood the village, or on the contrary be sealed shut and prevent any significant ex-changes. Worlds are then shaped in an arbitrary manner, following the flow of the Φύσις, unimpeded by the guiding hand of the Τέχνη.

Before the emergence of the play of differences and translation, the custodians at Babylon, and others who successfully ventured into the foreign, already witnessed the difference between two worlds, putting them in tension. They could see that two worlds could contradict each other, raising the question of their truthfulness, that is, of their ground. At this point, man nonetheless did not possess the means to act and to find an answer to this question. He could witness the fact that the houses were different, but as the nature of the difference was concealed to him and as the bridges had yet to be built, he was thus condemned to remain a spectator of the play of worlds, a man standing in the middle of the playing field and played by the game, but nonetheless powerless to influence it significantly. Once he becomes aware of the play and of his capacity to become a player, and once translation appears in the village, he may then enter the play of worlds, not only witnessing differences, but also transforming differences indirectly by controlling the ex-changes between worlds, initiating or preventing them. He may then be more than the observer of a contrast between architectures, and he may be offered the opportunity to become an architect himself, having a global vision of the village as a whole.

The clash of worlds does not start with a full-on collision of houses as a whole, as this is simply not possible. Man can only work on one sign at a time, and therefore any house-wide transfor-

⁷⁶ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2 Revised edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004: 104. Print; Original German: “das Hin und Her einer Bewegung gemeint, die an keinem Ziele festgemacht ist, an dem sie endet.” From Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gesammelte Werke: Band 1: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. A. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010: 109. Print.

mation has to occur as a series of small steps. The confrontation of any two worlds thus begins on the sign level, with one block being trans-lated to another dwelling. This process has been described in a previous section, but the major difference here is that these *trans-lated* signs, which not only include pure “*translation*” but also any other kind of trans-fer between houses such as borrowed signs, are only pieces of a larger game. These trans-lations have a purpose larger than themselves. They are only pawns in the game of worlds, and their meaning can thus only be seen when one steps back to see the houses as a whole.



Fig. 21 *The clash of worlds*. Only when worlds collide can their strengths and weaknesses be revealed. The impact shatters the structures that lacked foundations deeply anchored into the ground, and their remnants are dispersed in the skies. The clash transforms both worlds: it brought on destruction, but what is left standing is stronger than ever.

When man trans-lates a sign, he can attempt to integrate it

“as is” into the structure of the house, carving a place for it into the house, or he can strive to use the house as a raw material from which he can fashion the closest possible imitation of the original. MacIntyre differentiates the two, in technical language, as “translation by same-saying and translation by linguistic innovation.”⁷⁷ In both cases, “these newborn words transpose us in every case to a new shore,”⁷⁸ as Heidegger says. Extracted from the house from which it originates, and therefore from its architecture, the translated sign is already different than the original. Even a seemingly “perfect” direct borrowing nonetheless cuts off the sign from its surrounding architecture; it severs the relations it had with the other signs of the house. On the other hand, by integrating the translated sign into its host, new connections are now established, and the sign thus perturbs the host architecture. In the words of the German philosopher: “what is to be said has already been transported for us *into another truth and clarity* — or perhaps obscurity [Fragwürdigkeit].”⁷⁹ Here lies one of the core aspects of translation: it represents an encounter between worlds, between visions of what people consider to be the truth of the Φύσις.

By translating a sign from one world to another, man throws a block into a foreign river, and the impact ripples through the waters, affecting their entirety. The insertion of a new sign into the house becomes a test of its architectural coherence and of the solidity of its foundations. Already before the building of the bridge, the tension between houses could unveil the presence of contradictions between two worlds, but here, the translation goes further. It also provokes a confrontation, which is meant to be resolved. The mention of an “obscurity” in the English translation of Heidegger’s quote nonetheless is itself source of a concealment, as the original word, *Fragwürdigkeit*, implies a dubiousness, and the raising of an interrogation rather than darkness. The translation does not enlighten, nor does it plunge into darkness. It is foremost an

⁷⁷ MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 1st edition. University of Notre Dame Press, 1989: 372. Print.

⁷⁸ Heidegger, Martin. *Parmenides*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998: 12. Print; Original German: “Diese Erstlinge des Wortes setzen uns jedesmal über zu einem neuen Ufer.” From: GA 54: 18.

⁷⁹ Ibid.^t: 12 (Emphasis and text in brackets added); Original German: “was zu sagen ist, übersetzt hat in eine andere Wahrheit und Klarheit oder auch Fragwürdigkeit.” From: GA 54: 18; N.b.: The word *Fragwürdigkeit* suggests a questionability, a dubiousness rather than a literal obscurity.

occasion to reflect on the search for truth.

For the player of the game of worlds, to trans-late is not merely a transport of signs, but rather to be *in der Sorge des Wortes*,⁸⁰ in “the care of the word,” to borrow an expression of the German master. This preoccupation for the sign is what differentiates the play of worlds from the game of worlds. The interrogation raised by the presence of the trans-lated sign in the midst of the foreign world is a spark that can ignite the fire of the clash of worlds, by uncovering the lack of ground of certain portions of the house, and pushing its weak elements out until they crumble. It is when the groundless is put in the presence of the truth that the *idola fori* can be unmasked and thrown away from the house of being. If the house is found to lack ground, it is the world it shelters as a whole that is threatened to collapse, and the trans-lation of foreign elements acts as a catalyst for the revelation of a house’s weaknesses. This phenomenon is not limited to trans-lation of course, as illustrated by the following example:

Theoretical progress is very often achieved not by the *analysis* of some notably perplexing phenomenon or concept an answer to the question What is X? — but *replacement* or *expulsion* of the relevant bits of language. The idea was famously advanced by late nineteenth-century physicist Heinrich Hertz. Noting that the question ‘What is force?’ seems to summon up an ill-behaved assortment of ideas, mental pictures and so on. Hertz suggested that the term should simply be removed from formulations of physics. For in that case: ‘When these painful contradictions are removed, the question as to the nature of force will not have been answered, but our minds, no longer vexed, will cease to ask illegitimate questions.’⁸¹

The work of great thinkers can certainly also lead to an unconcealment of vulnerabilities in a dwelling, but trans-lation represents a particularly efficient way to uncover the deficiencies that are so close and so pervasive that they remain invisible.

Indeed, the foreign traditions grew independently, with other

⁸⁰ GA 54: 13.

⁸¹ Kemp, Gary. *Quine: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: A&C Black, 2006: 158. Print.

lethe and other idols, and they can provide an original outlook on one's home. The philologist Max Müller also perceived the burden that an ungrounded language can represent for the progress of knowledge: "I believe, . . . that it would really be of the greatest benefit to mental science if all such terms as impressions, sensations — soul, spirit, and the rest, could, for a time, be banished, and not be readmitted till they had undergone a thorough purification."⁸² The clash of worlds induces such a movement of banishment and purification, as the trans-lated signs fracture the integrity of the world of its host, but far from simply destroying it, it rather offers a chance to see that this world is not *the* world, and see what some other possible ones are.

By showing how a different river and a different earth can produce different fruits, trans-lation may thus show the inhabitant of a house that *being* is larger than his *house of being*. The work of the trans-lator therefore not only brings a foreign element to the home, it also *trans-poses* the men who receive this gift. A trans-position is nonetheless more than a mere sight of the foreign, as explained by Gadamer:

Transposing ourselves consists neither in the empathy of one individual for another nor in subordinating another person to our own standards; rather, it always involves rising to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other. The concept of "horizon" suggests itself because it expresses the superior breadth of vision that the person who is trying to understand must have. To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand — not in order to look away from it but to see it better, within a larger whole and in truer proportion.⁸³

⁸² Quoted in: Ogden, Charles Kay, I. A. Richards, and Bronislaw Malinowski. *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism*. Harcourt, Brace & World, 1923: 147. Print.

⁸³ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2 Revised edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004: 304. Print; Original German: "Solches Sichversetzen ist weder Einfühlung einer Individualität in eine andere, noch auch Unterwerfung des anderen unter die eigenen Maßstäbe, sondern bedeutet immer die Erhebung zu einer höheren Allgemeinheit, die nicht nur die eigene Partikularität, sondern auch die des anderen überwindet. Der Begriff >Horizont<

The “higher universality” is the ground, that is, the earth and the skies that are shared equally by the dwellers of all houses. Translation can indeed contribute to the broadening of one’s “horizon,” but this process is not one that occurs without friction. Gadamer also says that “the fusion of horizons that takes place in understanding is actually the achievement of language,”⁸⁴ but the term of “fusion,” chosen by Gadamer, may lead us to overlook the fact that different worlds imply different visions of truth, visions of the ground. If the ground is universally shared, it follows that different competing visions of truth will conflict with each other, and that ultimately, what is truly rooted in the ground should prevail over what lacks earthly roots. The clash of worlds thus does not represent a “fusion” of all the horizons of the different houses of the village, but rather a harmonization paired with an integration. The result of the clash of worlds is not a mere fusion of isolated dwellings into a totalizing structure, in which the houses would be left unchanged and simply merged. It instead represents the endeavor of transforming the disorderly village into an embryo of a **city of being**.

What differentiates the city from the village is its organization. It is indeed planned according to the will of men, who knock down what they deem unfit and modify, reshape, or expand other parts so that the gathering of the individual houses can form a harmonious and coherent whole. The will is thus the source of the building of a city, but St Augustine gives us a supplementary insight with his own definitions: “a city is nothing more than a single-minded multiplicity of individual men”⁸⁵ or “a group of men

bietet sich hier an, weil er der überlegenen Weitsicht Ausdruck gibt, die der Verstehende haben muß. Horizont gewinnen meint immer, daß man über das Nahe und Allzunähe hinaussehen lernt, nicht um von ihm wegzusehen, sondern um es in einem größeren Ganzen und in richtigeren Maßen besser zu sehen.” From: Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gesammelte Werke: Band 1: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. A. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010: 310. Print.

⁸⁴ Ibid.^t: 371; Original German: “die im Verstehen geschehende Verschmelzung der Horizonte die eigentliche Leistung der Sprache ist.” From: Ibid.^o: 383.

⁸⁵ Original Latin: “cum aliud civitas non sit quam concors hominum multitudo”; Original and translation from: Henderson, Jeffrey. “AUGUSTINE, The City of God against the Pagans.” *Loeb Classical Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Dec. 2016.

united by some bond of fellowship.”⁸⁶ A city thus forms an entity gathering men, similar to the way the dwellers of a single house form a single people in the post-Babel part of the narrative, but one gathering houses and their dwellers as a whole rather than just gathering mere individuals.

To be “single-minded” also implies that the city possesses a common goal. In order for a structure to be planned, one must have a vision of what is to be achieved, but at this point, during the clash of worlds and the beginning of the edification of the city, what is this common goal? For now, the Sanctuary has yet to be brought to the foreign houses. The clash of worlds will therefore firstly be driven by the will to unveil the ground of the worlds, the establishment of truth as a foundation for the city to be built, as the earth is the most easily perceived reference common to all men. The first aim of the city-builders will thus be to deepen the anchorage of the worlds into the earth, blowing away the clouds in order to make room for strong rocks inserted into the soil. Such grounding is the first task of the builders, but it is not an end in itself. The houses are more than the ground upon which they are built, and the worlds are more than their foundations. This is precisely why the clash of worlds does not and should not end with a fusion of the worlds. What is built is a city and not a monolithic castle. The diversity of dwellings within the city is necessary for its growth, as even though they all share a common ground, the different houses harbor a variety of worlds, which are complementary, and whose complementary nature requires their differentiation from others.

One cannot grow all plants in the same greenhouse, as different species can originate from a different environment, and many cannot survive when transplanted too far away from their native soil. So are the fruits of the worlds scattered in the different houses: their ground is the same, but they have given birth to a broad range of worldly creations, which contrary to the ground can be opposed and can contradict the conceptions sheltered in other worlds. These contradictions nevertheless need to be isolated so as to prevent confusion, and the preservation of this diversity of creation thus requires the maintaining of a separation between the

⁸⁶ Original Latin: “civitas, quae nihil est aliud quam hominum multitudo aliquo societatis vinculo conligata.” From: *Ibid.*

houses in order to avoid the collapse of the city into a monolithic structure, which would then become a prison, as man would not be able to step outside of it.

The clash of worlds thus gives rise to two different movements. The first is directed toward the ground, and is aimed at discerning what in the different worlds rests on the earth from what rests on clouds, that is, not simply what opposes other worlds, but what opposes the earth itself, which contrary to worldly constructions is common to mankind as a whole. The second movement is one that is, for now at least, more diffuse, and whose goal is not yet as clearly visible as the previous one: it is aimed upward, away from the earth, and it is focused on the nurturing of the world's growth, the building of a harmonious city where a diversity of structures is maintained. The perception of the nature of this movement nonetheless requires a deeper insight into some of the peculiarities of trans-lation.

It was said earlier that trans-lation often involves the re-creation of an original sign, into another house, using its raw soil or other signs as source material. The nature of such a re-creation, of such a work of *mimesis*, plays a low-profile but nonetheless central role in the further edification of the city. Gadamer tells us that “every translation that takes its task seriously is at once clearer and flatter than the original.”⁸⁷ The use of the term “trans-lation” can mislead us to think that it is a mere displacement, whereas it is, in fact, as much a “trans-formation” as a “trans-port.” The trans-lated sign can remove from the original, as “even if it is a masterly re-creation, it must lack some of the overtones that vibrate in the original,”⁸⁸ but it can also add a contribution to it: “in rare cases of masterly re-creation the loss can be made good or even mean a gain — think, for example, of how Baudelaire’s *Les fleurs du mal* seems to acquire an odd new vigor in Stefan George’s

⁸⁷ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. 2 Revised edition. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004: 388. Print; Original German: “Jede Übersetzung, die ihre Aufgabe ernst nimmt, ist klarer und flacher als das Original.” From: Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gesammelte Werke: Band 1: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. A. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010: 390. Print.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*^t; Original German: “Auch wenn sie eine meisterhafte Nachbildung ist, muß ihr etwas von den Obertönen fehlen, die im Original mitschwingen.” From: *Ibid.*^o.

version.”⁸⁹ A key aspect of this property of trans-lation is the fact that by being brought to other houses of being, concealed facets of the sign-block can finally be seen. The trans-lation is not condemned to be a decayed, imperfect reproduction of an original. On the contrary, the sign would therefore need trans-lation in order to shine in all its glory. In the following quote, Paul Ricoeur gives us an example of this, in another realm:

Far from yielding less than the original, pictorial activity may be characterized in terms of an “iconic augmentation,” where the strategy of painting, for example, is to reconstruct reality on the basis of a limited optic alphabet. This strategy of contraction and miniaturization yields more by handling less. In this way, the main effect of painting is to resist the entropic tendency of ordinary vision — the shadow image of Plato — of oil painting by Dutch artists, enhances the contrasts, gives colors back their resonance, and lets appear the luminosity within which things shine.⁹⁰

Trans-lation can produce the same effect, and each house of being within the city offers an occasion to shed a new type of light on the trans-lated sign-block, thereby uncovering some of its aspects that were concealed until then. These aspects may not have been intended by the sign’s creator, but this in no way nullifies their value, nor their truthfulness.

A poet may be oblivious to the origin of the words he uses, that is, to all the links between these words and others or to their belonging to a long tradition, and yet, his creation would nonetheless include such associations, which would lay dormant within it, waiting to be unveiled by other men. Signs thus can mean more than what was intended by their creator, and their full meaning may remain concealed until a full spectrum of light has been shed onto them. Diamonds are created in the depths of the earth, but their brilliance and value are only seen when they are taken out of

⁸⁹ Ibid.^t; Original German: “In seltenen Fällen meisterhafter Schöpfung kann solcher Verlust ersetzt werden oder gar zu einem neuen Gewinn führen — ich denke etwa daran, wie Baudelaires »Blumen des Bösen< in der Georgesen Nachdichtung eine eigentümliche neue Gesundheit zu atmen scheinen.” From: Ibid.^o.

⁹⁰ Ricoeur, Paul. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. TCU Press, 1976: 40. Print.

the mine and bathed in the light of the sun. Each house produces its own kind of precious stones, which need to be taken away in order for their beauty to shine. The city, however, does not have a sun, a source of light with a complete white spectrum. Each house is a source, with a unique spectral distribution, a particular hue. Thus, in order to see its fullness, a sign must be seen under the light of each house. Only then will it be fully unveiled. This implies that signs *need* to be trans-lated if one is to see their complete signification.

The authentic trans-lator is thus burdened with a duty: to be more than a mere traveler between houses, and more than someone who simply puts the foundations of the houses to the test. He must be someone who reveals the hidden dimension of the signs, by taking them with him on his journey to the foreign or back home. To such men, each dwelling comes with a particular set of constraints on his creative power, in the manner of Ricoeur's "limited alphabet." It is nevertheless precisely thanks to these limitations that the previously hidden dimensions of the signs can appear, thereby contributing to the improvement of the city. The clash of worlds starts with such works of trans-lation, initiated at the level of signs by individuals who have found their place in the game of differences and the game of worlds. It is almost imperatively a collective effort, as the extent of the city and the sheer number of its inhabitants imply that in order to have any effect on houses and the city as a whole, a large number of diligent workers is required. When this group of men fulfills its duty, signs are added to signs, worlds are brought to other houses, and the effect of the trans-lations progressively grows, unconcealing more and more details from other source houses, while refining the structure of the host house. It provides new sign-blocks to the host, *strange ones* that needed the foreign soil and architecture for their genesis, as an exotic fruit imported from a remote land. This process can lead to world-wide or even city-wide transformations, if each house finds itself to be both a source and a host for trans-lations. Furthermore, it also represents a way to transcend the constraints of each dwelling, making the city more than the sum of the different constructions composing it, as each dwelling can now contribute to the extension and fortification of the other houses, and not simply further itself.

Thus, two different forces are exerting an effect on the field

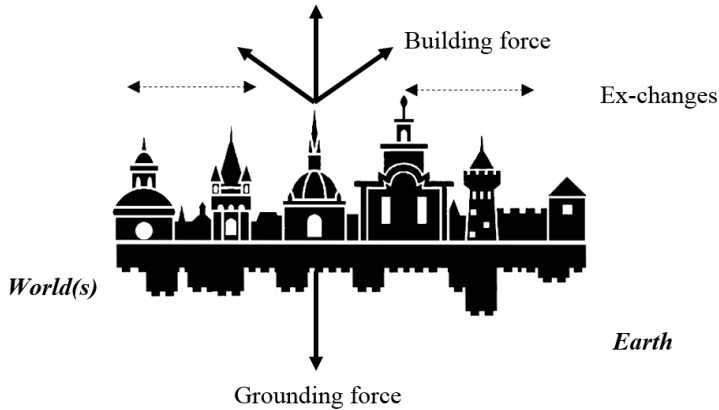


Fig. 22 *The forces at play in the clash of worlds.*

of the clash of worlds: a downward force that calls for an always deeper anchorage of the city into the ground, and an upward one by which men are incited to extend the building of the city. These two forces grow in strength, proportionally with the entropy of the exchanges between houses. The more travels and translation there are, the stronger will the movements of grounding and building be. The different elements at play in the clash of worlds can be schematized as in the following picture:

An important point to notice is that while there is only one possible way to ground a structure, the building of the houses within the city can be manifold. Different men can have a different vision of the direction toward which they should build the houses they inhabit, as for now, most of them lack a common reference for the world, parallel to the earth. Such a deficiency implies a certain chaos in the city's global architecture, as various factions of its population may strive toward different goals, thereby not only failing to cooperate on a city-wide scale, but possibly even striving against one another and destructing the work of their fellow men.

The power struggle at play in the clash of world is thus intertwined with another, more earthly one, as the direction taken by the city ultimately depends on who succeeds in convincing others that his vision should be followed, or imposing it through coercion. This secondary struggle is not only limited to a choice of direction.

Indeed, some might even oppose both the grounding and the building forces as a whole, as these may threaten their stronghold on earth or world. The proponents of an ideology based on clouds, for example, would resent any call to ground their world. On the other hand, people fearing the distancing from the earth that goes with an increasingly higher level of worldly construction might refuse to take the risk of seeing their world clouded by phantasies, and would therefore prefer sacrificing the benefits brought by the building of the city for the sake of caution.

In his dystopian novel *1984*,⁹¹ George Orwell skillfully describes a kind of relationship that can emerge between earthly and worldly power, showing how a tyranny can completely hold sway over a people by controlling and shaping its language, through a *newspeak* filled with taboos and ungrounded signs. A rigid attitude aimed at imposing a hegemony by brute force will nonetheless sooner or later lead to a breaking point. Going with the flow, one may last longer than trying to oppose it, and as Laozi says: “when opponents clash, the one who is sorry about it will be the winner.”⁹² The power-struggle for hegemony is to be lamented on, as it is detrimental to the truly productive strife, which is the clash of worlds. If one is sorry about it, it is because he perceives the fact that the true battle is not the one that he is forced to wage on the earth, but the one between the different houses of the city.

The earthly struggle impedes the building and the grounding of the city, but the clash of worlds will nonetheless continue, and sooner or later, a particular direction will prevail. This being said, the question that should be raised is perhaps not the question of who will ultimately win, as the clash will only end with the end of the great game altogether, but rather the subject of who *deserves* to win. Concerning the competition between traditions, MacIntyre also tells us that:

The only rational way for the adherents of any tradition to approach intellectually, culturally, and linguistically alien rivals is one that allows for the possibility that in one or more areas the other may be rationally superior

⁹¹ Orwell, George. *1984*. Plume, 2003: 53. Print.

⁹² Translation from: Johnson, Dale A. *Soft Like Water*. Lulu.com, 2009: 82. Print; Original Chinese: “抗兵相如，哀者勝矣。” From: 阿部吉雄。《新釈漢文大系〈7〉老子 莊子上巻》。東京：明治書院，1966：115。（道德經 69）

to it in respect precisely of that in the alien tradition which it cannot as yet comprehend⁹³

If one can accept the possibility that one's own world may lack ground, and that it may need a contribution from foreign houses in order to fix its clouded nature, or if one can simply accept the possibility that the other worlds may possess grounded signs that would be impossible for them to create, it demonstrates that one is a true player of the game of worlds.

The goal of the game is not to impose oneself and one's world in the city, as its growth would then be stalled and limited by the monolithic, hegemonic world of the tyrant, but rather to foster the city's development, which implies a cooperation between houses, and a genuine search for truth, as ground, and a desire to further the city's edification. For an aspiring tyrant of the city, "the existence of large possibilities of untranslatability and therefore of potential threats to the cultural, linguistic, social, and rational hegemony of one's own tradition, either in some particular area or overall, is therefore more and other than a threat."⁹⁴ The "untranslatable" is what cannot be brought to the foreign, the difference between an original and its best possible translation. Many scholars have denied its existence altogether, even proclaiming a "principle of effability," not only stating that every "thought" could be expressed in language (thereby also denying the interdependence between language and thought, the core insight of Heidegger's conception of language as house of being), but more importantly, that all that can be said in one language could be said in another.⁹⁵ In order for this principle to hold up to its pretensions, it would require that an entire house be brought into another, as the translation of an intricate poem skillfully making use of word-plays and other specificities of a particular tongue would be impossible without painstakingly explaining every one of its words, and every relationship between these words and others in the source language, something which naturally is impossible. As Umberto Eco said: "Of all semiotic systems, nothing rivals language in its

⁹³ MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 1st edition. University of Notre Dame Press, 1989: 388. Print.

⁹⁴ Ibid.: 388.

⁹⁵ Katz, J.J. "Effability and Translation." *Meaning and Translation. Philosophical and Linguistic Approaches*. Eds. F Guenther, M. Guenther Reutter. New York: New York University Press, 1978. 191–234. Print.

effability.”⁹⁶ Indeed, but the untranslatable is nonetheless very much present. Far from being a curse, it can both be a source of humility and an incentive to cooperate with other houses, showing that all have their role to play in the city of being.

Therefore, in the presence of various rival factions struggling for the control of the city and the direction that its building takes, the recognition of the necessity of the existence of a plurality of houses, combined with the acceptance of the possibility of a lack of ground of one’s own world, would seem to constitute a criteria that could be used to perceive who would be worthy of winning. As MacIntyre says:

Only those whose tradition allows for the possibility of its hegemony being put in question can have rational warrant for asserting such a hegemony. And only those traditions whose adherents recognize the possibility of untranslatability into their own language-in-use are able to reckon adequately with that possibility⁹⁷

Those who seek shall find, and the building of the city will be best achieved by those who clearly see the nature and the goal of its edification. For now, the building force remains diffuse, as no clear heavenly reference is shared by the various houses composing the city. The clash of worlds marks a period of discovery, with new worlds explored, given to all people to see, and exchanges occurring between them. It is also a period calling for introspection, with worlds shaken to their foundations, and the appearance of a questioning of the points of reference existing within each house, which were until now the unchallenged pillars of these worlds. It incites men to search for a sure ground, and to reflect on the nature of the strife of earth and world. This period of productive turmoil will then begin to be superseded by another, following Pentecost, as the reference meant to guide their building force will now be scattered and brought to all corners of the city. This precisely is the aim of the mission given to the disciples on Pentecost: the bringing of the Law to the city, a Law that is meant to guide all men, in every aspect of their lives, including their language,

⁹⁶ Eco, Umberto. *The Search for the Perfect Language*. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997: 24. Print.

⁹⁷ MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* 1st edition. University of Notre Dame Press, 1989: 388. Print.

their world, and the building work to which they contribute. This mission, initially undertaken by a select group of people, will nevertheless necessitate a second clash within the city: a clash of laws, as the law forms a Sanctuary, but one that possesses a triune nature. It is indeed cleaved between three houses and three worlds.

6.2.6.1.2 The clash of laws

The clash of worlds comes as a tidal wave after Pentecost, engulfing the village of being as a whole, regardless of the knowledge of the Sanctuary possessed by its inhabitants. The mission given to the disciples following the same event will also be the source of a second wave, but one that will be slower to rise, and that will appear on a precise location in what has now started to become a city. The clash of worlds paves the roads between the different parts of the city, establishing routes for ex-changes between houses and worlds, while grounding it further and harmonizing its general architecture. This constitutes a prelude, setting the stage for the fulfillment of the mission, which is to bring the Sanctuary, or rather an image of it, inside all the dwellings of the city. However, contrary to the clash of worlds, which concerned every human being, the mission begins with only the disciples present a Pentecost. Progressively, the group of missionaries will be expanded, but for now, only the dwellers of the three houses where parts of the Sanctuary are located can access the sacred precinct. The fulfillment of the divine command is nonetheless not limited to a mere transportation from one house to another. Prior to being able to bring the Sanctuary to the foreign, to single individual houses, a certain harmony must be found between the three sacred locations. In order for the three parts of the Law to be united within a single abode, they must first be confronted with one another, as each language shelters a different vision of the *Φύσις*, which inevitably conflicts with the two others. A clash of laws must occur if the disciples are to unite them in the foreign, so that a harmony can be found and an image of the Sanctuary be forged, one that would not betray its nature.

The clash of laws nonetheless significantly differs from the game of worlds. The latter aims at the fostering of productive ex-changes between the houses and a harmonious building of the

city, but the former is bound to a special task: to deliver a translation of three laws, from three different worlds, into a single house of being. The clash of worlds does not imply any fusion between worlds, but the second clash is meant to have a fused translation as its end product. For each habitation within the city, a harmonious compromise must be found, not only between the three components of the Sanctuary but also with the host house. Four architectures and three laws must be conciliated to sculpt a representation of the Sanctuary within the distant houses. It implies an acceptable level of commensurability between worlds, as the Deity could hardly be seen as giving men a mission that would be impossible to complete.

The need for the clash of laws has often been overlooked, but St Augustine nonetheless clearly saw the ultimate goal of the mission:

Holy Scripture, which brings a remedy for the terrible diseases of the human will, being at first set forth in one language, by means of which it could at the fit season be disseminated through the whole world, was interpreted into various tongues, and spread far and wide, and thus became known to the nations for their salvation⁹⁸

The saint nonetheless forgot the oneness of all parts of the Scriptures, which are *not* first set forth in one language, but rather in three: the houses of Adam, Aram, and Yawan. The three parts of the Sanctuary cannot be cut off from one another, as each part sheds light on the whole, and is necessary in order to perceive its meaning. St Augustine would seem to consider that the oneness of the language of the Law would facilitate its dissemination throughout the city, but the triune nature of the Scripture does not form a stumbling block on this path of dissemination. A unity of language may be “simpler” indeed, but the plural nature of the

⁹⁸ Schaff, Philip. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series, Volume II St. Augustine: City of God, Christian Doctrine*. New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007: 536. Print. (On Christian doctrine, Book II Ch 5); Original Latin: “Ex quo factum est ut etiam Scriptura divina, qua tantis morbis humanarum voluntatum subvenitur, ab una lingua profecta, qua opportune potuit per orbem terrarum disseminari, per varias interpretum linguas longe lateque diffusa innotesceret Gentibus ad salutem.” From: Saint Augustine. *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi Opera Omnia vol 3*. N.p.:n.p., 1836: 44. Print.

Law may show its purpose through the clash of laws. This point is also directly related to the question of the plurality of the houses within the village or the city, and even to the larger question of the unconcealment produced by the existence of contrasts in the Φύσις in general. As meaning is brought on by separations, the separation of the Sanctuary, like the separation of the dwellings within the city of being, is not fortuitous, but rather is a source of meaning and meaningfulness. The harmony and commensurability between the three parts are not *given* to man. It is part of his burden to *find* them. This preliminary task, if successfully completed, will improve the quality of the subsequent translations, but more than this, the whole enterprise will teach man that he has to work relentlessly in order to find the meaning of the Law, of the worlds, and of the Φύσις as a whole.

True, unrestrained searches have nonetheless too often been opposed by theologians, who saw in them an arbitrariness and an uncertainty that may destabilize the faith. The divine law has been seen as fixed for all eternity, not only its letters, its signifier, but its signified as well. Theology has often imposed such a rigid vision of the Law, and even of knowledge in general. This is especially true among faiths whose scriptures have been written down in only one language, and which consider translations as dangerous corruptions of the absolute truth found in the original. S^t Ephrem tells us that: “the Scriptures are agreed, men are divided,”⁹⁹ reminding us that even though the Law may be completely true, it is nonetheless mediated by houses of being that are built and maintained by a community of dwellers, composed of men who are all dwelling in different parts of the house, different sub-worlds. Therefore, the unity of the Law does not preclude it from being mis-read and wrongly perceived. Men must strive to discern what in their vision of the Law comes from the Law itself, from what comes from their own world and from their own *logos* or their will. Cleaved into three different houses of being, the divine law of the narrative positions itself against a simplistic reading and appropriation. Spread into three different worlds, which themselves

⁹⁹ Translation from: Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847: 329. Print; Original Syriac: “ܡܠܚܡܐ ܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܠܚܡܐ”, from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1961: 209. Print.

necessarily contain incommensurable elements, the three parts of the Sanctuary cannot perfectly fit under one roof. And yet, each one of these parts must be true, as the Syrian saint points out:

ܡܢ ܕܢܝܥܐ ܕܡܢܐ	Who can deny the Names of the
ܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ	True One; he hath heard His true
ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ	Nature in His Name: and if the
ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ	name of Son and of Generate were
ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ	found to be untrue, then was He a
ܡܢܐ	deceiver. ¹⁰⁰

— St Ephrem, *Hymns on Faith*¹⁰¹

From the point of view of the narrative, the Deity cannot deceive man, and therefore all parts of the Sanctuary would need to be entirely true. Each one of the three worlds nevertheless offers a different vision of the Φύσις and of the path that is to be taken by man, visions that may contain elements contradicting others. These two statements may appear to present a conundrum: how can different things all be true and yet contradict each other? If the Sanctuary was located within a single house, a theologian would be tempted to simply dogmatically declare that its construction is perfect, and there thus would be no difficulty, and no search necessary, as all that man should do is to contemplate and study this perfect work, carved in the walls of a sacred house. Here, however, such a shortcut is impossible, and one has to address this question posed by the plurality of the Sanctuary.

It is often the case that a paradox is caused by misconceptions concerning the premises of the situation where it appears. Here, this cause would be the failure to distinguish between the purely worldly and earthly components of the Sanctuary that is under scrutiny. The earth is absolute truth, common to the dwellers of all houses, upon which their worlds should in principle be built. The parts of the worlds that are directly grounded into the earth cannot contradict other similarly grounded parts, located in other worlds. These worlds are nonetheless more than mere earth. They are also man-made constructions, not necessarily representing or

¹⁰¹ Translation from: Ibid.^t: 314–315; Original Syriac from: Ibid.^o: 193.

referring to the earth. The world can refer to itself, represent itself, and be a space where a different type of creation can take place, one that contrasts with the divinely created earth. Therefore, the fact that the three parts of the Sanctuary are “true” does not imply that they are free from oppositions or contradictions between one another. Their ground is the same, but their more upper-level constructions have a life of their own, like the branches of a single tree, which go in different directions, and it is these branches that can become so strange as to oppose neighboring structures.

In the narrative, the triune Sanctuary is validated as true, but it only forms a small part of the houses that shelter it, houses that themselves do not possess such validation. The possibly contradictory elements between the three parts are to be found in their purely worldly components, and not in their common ground. The purely worldly nature of these elements is nonetheless precisely what allows them to be both true and yet possibly contradict one another. Indeed, these worldly parts are the products of the poetic power of men, rather than fruits of the earth, and they therefore cannot pretend to represent an absolute truth. What makes the worldly parts of the Sanctuary true is only the divine validation that has been bestowed upon them, separating them from the profane parts of the houses. These worldly parts are true because they give man a sure guidance in the world: the Law shows the path that man must take if he wants to fulfill his destiny, and if he truly follows this path, he cannot be led astray, otherwise, God “was a deceiver.” This path can only be shown within a house of being, and there is therefore no unique, absolute, or transcendent path, but rather a multitude of them, as numerous as the houses of being themselves. This explains how a plurality of laws can be at the same time entirely true, and yet harbor conflicting worldly visions: the earthly components of the Law are absolute, and they therefore cannot be a source of contradiction, but the worldly ones are deeply dependent on a precise house of being, and their truthfulness should therefore only be assessed from within this particular house. Different worlds can thus harbor different truths, but this does not posit a relativistic view of truth, as this relativity only concerns worldly creations, and not the Deity’s, the earth, life, and the sky, which on the other hand is absolute and common to all houses.

There is, therefore, nothing paradoxical in the truthfulness of

a threefold Sanctuary, but another crucial question now follows: what is the purpose of this threefold nature of the Sanctuary? In order to answer this question, the effect exerted by this threefold nature on man's walk on the path of thinking must first be examined. The plurality of houses within the city previously showed the benefits and the need for ex-changes between dwellings, that is, the need for dialogue between worlds, so that man would relentlessly seek to ground the fruits of his work and not simply live in the clouds. The threefold nature of the Sanctuary first shows that different parts of the divine revelation are dependent on different houses, which are man-made. The revelation validates a part of a world as *a* truth, one that may differ from another revelation occurring in a different world. The Deity is *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים), it is *Alāhā* (אלה), and it is *Theós* (θεός). Three different visions, which are nonetheless all true, and together point out the need for a manifold, dialogic conception of truth.

The Law is one, but multi-faceted, as is the Deity itself. It is offered to man, and yet he also has to seek it himself. The triune Law would seem to be designed as a safeguard against a monologic vision of truth and the path of thinking. In the words of the Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin: "The monologic way of perceiving cognition and truth is only one of the possible ways. It arises only where consciousness is placed above existence [над бытием¹⁰²], and where the unity of existence [единство бытия] is transformed into the unity of consciousness."¹⁰³ Men are united by their dwelling on the same earth (a unity of existence) but are divided in their dwelling in different worlds (a difference of consciousness). Ignorance of this fact would naturally lead to such monologism, which not only would promote skleronoia, but also prevent man from seeing that the path pointed out by the Law is not absolute, but rather depends on man's world as much as on the Deity. Furthermore, Bakhtin explains that:

¹⁰² The word translated as "existence" in the English version of the book could also, more literally, be translated as "being" (быть, "to be").

¹⁰³ Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. 1st edition. Minneapolis: Univ of Minnesota Press, 1984: 81. Print; Original Russian: "Монологическая форма восприятия познания и истины --- лишь одна из возможных форм. Эта форма возникает лишь там, где сознание ставится над бытием и единство бытия превращается в единство сознания." From: Бахтин, М.М. *Проблемы творчества Достоевского*. Киев: Next, 1994. N. pag. PDF.

In an environment of philosophical monologism the genuine interaction of consciousnesses is impossible, and thus genuine dialogue is impossible as well. In essence idealism knows only a single mode of cognitive interaction among consciousnesses: someone who knows and possesses the truth instructs someone who is ignorant of it and in error; that is, it is the interaction of a teacher and a pupil, which, it follows, can be only a pedagogical dialogue. A monologic perception of consciousness holds sway in other spheres of ideological creativity as well. All that has the power to mean, all that has value, is everywhere concentrated around one center — the carrier.¹⁰⁴

A monologic conception of truth implies that the Law, and the language in which it is revealed, both possess a rigidly determined meaning, independent from its recipients. The Deity gives, and man then simply needs to read and obey. Already within one house, the interpretation of such a monologic law would be the source of controversies and disagreements, simply because meaning in language is never rigidly fixed, no matter whether man believes it to be so or not. This monologic conception is not inevitable, even when one is confined within a single house, but “semantic unity [смыслового единства]¹⁰⁵ of any sort is everywhere represented by a single consciousness and a single point of view.”¹⁰⁶ This semantic unity is illusory, and it induces the belief that “everything capable of meaning can be gathered together in one consciousness and subordinated to a unified accent; whatever does not submit to such

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.^t: 81–82. Original Russian: “На почве философского монолизма невозможно существенное взаимодействие сознаний, а поэтому невозможен существенный диалог. В сущности, идеализм знает лишь один вид познавательного взаимодействия между сознаниями: научение знающим и обладающим истинной не знающего и ошибающегося, то есть взаимоотношение учителя и ученика, и, следовательно, только педагогический диалог. Монологическое восприятие сознания господствует и в других сферах идеологического творчества. Повсюду все значимое и ценное сосредоточиваются вокруг одного центра — носителя.” From: Ibid.^o.

¹⁰⁵ The term “смыслового единства,” translated as “semantic unity,” can also be more literally translated as a “unity of thought,” a translation that perhaps would be more appropriate here.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.^t; Original Russian: “Представителем всякого смыслового единства повсюду становится одно сознание и одна точка зрения.” From: Ibid.^o (Text in brackets added).

a reduction is accidental and unessential.”¹⁰⁷ Such a monologic conception can hardly be defended concerning the Sanctuary once it takes its final triune form following the Pentecost, foremost because of the difficulty to see any “semantic unity,” which is at the core of monologism, in three different houses and three different worlds. What could be seen as possible with a single Law, within a single house, becomes highly implausible when this Law is cleaved across three languages. The very nature of the Sanctuary therefore stands against such a monologic conception of truth, but then one may ask: what is the alternative?

In the following passage, the Russian scholar gives us a first idea concerning what a non-monologic approach to truth may be, one that may help us perceive the effect and purpose of the triune nature of the divine Law of the narrative:

It is quite possible to imagine and postulate a unified truth that requires a plurality of *consciousnesses* [множественности сознаний], one that cannot in principle be fitted into the bounds of a single consciousness, one that is, so to speak, by its very nature full of event potential and is born at a point of contact among various consciousnesses (emphasis added).¹⁰⁸

The con-science (*со-знание*, [so-znanie]) literally is what is shared by a group of people, and the “consciousnesses” of Bakhtin’s statement can be paralleled to the “worlds.” A single truth may thus be spread across a plurality of worlds, and form a “point of contact” between them. A single divine law may require a plurality of worlds to harbor it, so as to overcome the limitations of monologism and of every single house of being¹⁰⁹. Such a pluralis-

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.^t; Original Russian: “Все значимое можно собрать в одном сознании и подчинить единому акценту; то же, что не поддается такому сведению, случайно и несущественно” From: Ibid.^o.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.^t; Original Russian: “Вполне можно допустить и помыслить, что единая истина требует множественности сознаний, что она принципиально не вместила в пределы одного сознания, что она, так сказать, по природе событийна и рождается в точке соприкосновения разных сознаний.” From: Ibid.^o.

¹⁰⁹ The fact that the Law may need a plurality of worlds in order to shine in all its splendor should nevertheless not be interpreted as implying the existence of a “supra-worldly” Law. There is no “ideal” Law outside of the houses of being, which would be approximated by a plurality of representations within different houses, as representations themselves are only possible within them. The multiplicity of representations and their dialogue both represent the Law

tic counterpart to the monologic conception of truth is called by Bakhtin “polyphony,” which he thus characterizes:

The essence of polyphony lies precisely in the fact that the voices remain independent and, as such, are combined in a unity of a higher order than in homophony. If one is to talk about individual will, then it is precisely in polyphony that a combination of several individual wills takes place, that the boundaries of the individual will can be in principle exceeded.¹¹⁰

The vocal analogy is well-chosen, but rather than contrasting the difference between a single voice and a chorus, a more fitting albeit more technical analogy may be to compare worlds with the individual frequencies that compose the sound of a single voice. Any complex sound can indeed be seen as a combination of elementary sounds, sinusoidal waves with particular frequencies.¹¹¹ Each elementary sound has the same form, varying only in its frequency, but if the sounds are emitted together, what is produced may now have any shape, depending on the frequencies of the elementary waves that are emitted. This phenomenon can be visualized with the help of Fig. 23. This figure shows that the sum of elementary sounds represented in the upper part can form something that looks and sounds radically different than its individual elements (lower part). Only when combined can the sinusoidal waves transcend their nature and be able to form arbitrarily shaped sound waves. This technical analogy, how remote from the biblical narrative as it may be, nonetheless well describes the polyphonic nature of the triune Sanctuary, and it will help us see the role that it plays in the (hi)story of language and being in the narrative.

Indeed, each part of the triune Sanctuary forms a particular sound, a divine herding call meant to guide a flock toward their

itself, perfect in that it even integrates the possibility of imperfections and competing interpretations.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.^t; Original Russian: “Сущность полифонии именно в том, что голоса здесь остаются самостоятельными и, как таковые, сочетаются в единстве высшего порядка, чем в гомофонии. Если уж говорить об индивидуальной воле, то в полифонии именно и происходит сочетание нескольких индивидуальных волей, совершается принципиальный выход за пределы одной воли.” From: Ibid.^o.

¹¹¹ This phenomenon was first discovered by the French mathematician Joseph Fourier. The composition and decomposition of complex waves into their sinusoidal components are now known as Fourier series and Fourier transforms.

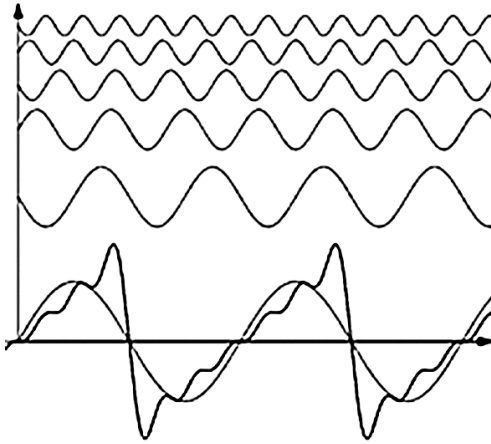


Fig. 23 *Wave composition.*

master and creator. Each one of these sounds can nonetheless only be heard from within the house in which it is produced. It cannot go through the walls of a house of being, as no medium beyond them can carry it further. Man can nonetheless travel to the three locations, and hear the three different sounds. Pure and perfectly clear within their own space, the three sounds are still significantly different when heard together: they may interfere with each other, sometimes reinforcing one another but also potentially nullifying themselves when they are opposed, as two opposite forces that produce no movement. True within their own house, each part of the Law may interfere with other parts when they are seen together, as a whole. This, far from denying the truthfulness of these parts, allows the Law to be something more than anything that could be sheltered within a single house of being. The Sanctuary can be the source of a complex sound, the composition of three truths that produce something that is more than the sum of its parts: a “higher-order unity.” This rich sound is nonetheless not directly revealed to man. Only the means to produce it are given to him, through the gift of the Sanctuary itself. The three parts of the Law thus only constitute three elementary notes that can be played by man, and it is his responsibility to bring these notes together to reveal the Law’s unity.

The Byzantine liturgy for Pentecost contains the following

hymn: “Once, when He descended and confounded the tongues, the Most High divided the nations / and when He divided the tongues of fire, He called all men into unity / and *with one accord* (συμφώνως [symphōnōs]) we glorify the All-holy Spirit.”¹¹² The plurality of languages, of the city, and of the Sanctuary, indeed require man’s efforts in order to produce a συμ-φωνία [sym-phōnía], that is, a harmonious arrangement composed of different independent sounds. Following Pentecost, the three parts of the Sanctuary must be brought together in such a sym-phony if man is to complete the mission given to him by the Deity. The truthfulness of each part, within its own world, nonetheless does not entail that their combination would be truthful. It is man’s responsibility to find a harmony between them so that they would not only not negatively interfere with each other, but on the contrary amplify one another, making the triune law resonate across the city.

The Law is thus not a mere top-down revelation given by the Deity to a humanity reduced to a role of mute pupil listening to a teacher. The Law is an instrument that must be appropriated and learned by men who are destined to use this instrument to call the distant houses of the city, to call them to follow the path pointed out by the Deity. The inhabitants of the distant houses are called to come as pilgrims to the Sanctuary and be given a place among the disciples. In order for the call to be heard, it must nonetheless first be brought to each house of the city, that is, it must be trans-lated into all languages. The distant houses, which are isolated from the Sanctuary, also form the receptacle where the sym-phony, the harmony of laws, can be searched and heard. Any united representation of the triune Sanctuary must indeed be sheltered within one particular house. To trans-late the triune Law, that is, to represent its unity within a foreign house, therefore not only implies a search for a harmony between the three parts of Law, but also one with the host / the house / the language, which acts as the catalyst of the sym-phony. With such a polyphonic conception of truth and the Law, trans-lation is thus valorized:

¹¹² *Pentecostarion*. Boston, MA: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1990: 412. Print. (Emphasis and text in parentheses added); Original Greek: “Ὅτε καταβάς τὰς γλώσσας συνέχεε, διεμέριζεν ἔθνη ὁ Ὑψιστος, ὅτε τοῦ πυρὸς τὰς γλώσσας διένειμεν, εἰς ἐνότητα πάντα ἐκάλεσε, καὶ συμφώνως δοξάζομεν τὸ πανάγιον Πνεῦμα.” From: “Τῷ ΣΑΒΒΑΤῳ ΜΕΤΑ ΤΗΝ ΠΕΝΤΗΚΟΣΤΗΝ” *Ελληνικά λειτουργικά κείμενα της ορθοδόξου εκκλησίας*. Web. 4 Apr. 2016. (Πεντηκοσταριον).

it is not a mere decayed imitation of an original, but rather is a location where the unity of the triune original can be searched and found. It is where its significance can become manifest.

The fact that the harmony of the trans-lation is to be found by man nevertheless ineluctably implies a certain level of distortion, in the form of both a surplus and a deficit of meaning. The trans-lation not only constitutes a unification of the triune Sanctuary, it is also an interpretation, a re-creation, which overlays the colors of the host world and the trans-lator's will onto the original. Trans-lations can be virtuously crafted works of art, but they can also be inharmonious travesties, depending on the efforts and skills of the poets who create them. The important element is that the trans-lation *can* shed light on the original, and even "improve" it in some way. Man has been given a book containing the Sanctuary, but it only constitutes the doorway of the Law, rather than its end.

The mission given at Pentecost is not for a select group of people who has been given the Law to go and teach it to those who have not received this honor. On the contrary, to bring the Sanctuary to the foreign is only the beginning of the revelation of the Law and through it, of the revelation of the nature of language itself, and of its relationship with man's being. Each work of trans-lation will not only form an image, a re-production of an original Sanctuary, but it will also become part of the Sanctuary itself, and of the vision that man has of it. Every house of the city will be given a different vision of it, because of the peculiarities of its world, and because of the choices made by the trans-lators. Even within a single house, different trans-lations will also compete with each other, as they will not be equally valued.

Contrary to what is often commonly thought, however, the sign of a good trans-lation of the Sanctuary will not be to pass as an original, to make its reader forget that it is a work of trans-lation. It should not attempt to make man forget the three original parts of the Sanctuary, but should rather, on the contrary, be an invitation to travel as a pilgrim to the center of the city, to the source from which the trans-lation originates. The three original parts form a doorway to the foreign, a call to bring the Sanctuary to all parts of the city, but in turn, the trans-lations themselves should then also become a doorway, calling all the inhabitants of the city to its center, to the core of the Sanctuary itself. The trans-

lations can shed light on the original(s), but they do not replace it, and they should only incite men to learn to make the three houses sheltering the original Sanctuary their homes, learning the languages of Adam, Aram and Yawan.

The Pentecost thus marks the beginning of a cycle initiated by the bringing of trans-lations to the remote parts of the city, and the attempts at finding a harmony between the three parts of the original Sanctuary. These trans-lations then trigger a wave of pilgrims who will come to dwell in the core of the Sanctuary, bringing the trans-lations with them and exerting an influence on the way the whole community of dwellers of this consecrated place sees it. An echo thus occurs between the three core parts and the trans-lations that form an extension of the Sanctuary, with the multitude of translations helping to shed light on the triune original, and the multitude of pilgrims producing new trans-lations or refining them. As the trans-lators and pilgrims are all fallible men, the cycle never ends, but man is nevertheless through language given an always clearer sight of the path meant to guide his being. The path is not entirely cleared in front of him. Only its threshold is pointed out, and it is his task to clear the way, through this continuous cycle, this echo by which the plurality of worlds and trans-lations contributes to further reveal the Law, and reveal man's destiny.

Trans-lations are therefore valorized. They are the *locus* where man can clear the path toward his destiny and discover his essential being, by giving him an increasingly accurate vision of his facticity and of the path that he is meant to follow. Trans-lations are all potentially deficient and imperfect, but this is precisely what makes them so powerful, as in contrast to the simpler case of a unique and perfect revelation within a single house of being, men here have an active role to play, not as simple recipients of the Law, but rather as explorers. The key difference between a monologic and a polyphonic law is the fact that while the former is a destination, the latter is only the beginning of a quest for truth, and for the destiny of man's being. Here lies the beauty of the plurality of houses of being of the city. Here also lies the elegance of the triune law in its midst, and of its extension through the mission given at Pentecost, which is meant to guide and to set in motion rather than to simply teach a passive crowd of pupils. This guidance and motion can nonetheless only occur when man sees

the Sanctuary and the mission for what they really are. The self-confidence of theology may cast shadows on this nature, and thus keep man at the threshold of his destiny, at the beginning of the path. Such a blinding arrogance is nonetheless not restricted to theology, but it is rather found in all sciences. The opening words of the second part of Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum*, written more than three centuries ago, remarkably points out this even now all too common stumbling block on the path of truth:

Those who have taken it on themselves to lay down the Law of nature as something that has already been discovered and understood, whether they have spoken in simple confidence or in a spirit of professional posturing, have done great harm to philosophy and the sciences. As well as succeeding in producing beliefs in people, they have been effective in squashing and stopping inquiry: and the harm they have done by spoiling and putting an end to other men's efforts outweighs any good their own efforts have brought.¹¹³

This is true concerning the "Law of nature" (the laws of the Φύσις), but also concerning the divine law of the narrative and its theological interpretation. If the law has already been "laid down," man can only come and contemplate the perfection of the Sanctuary. This, however, would be similar to the story of the man who looks at another man's finger pointing out the moon, failing to notice what it is pointed at as he focuses his attention on the instrument of signification.¹¹⁴ In technical language, he mistakes the signifier for the signified, which precisely is the mistake induced by a monologic approach to the revealed law, and by any monologic conception of language and truth as well. The way the

¹¹³ Bacon, Francis. *The New Organon or: True Directions Concerning the Interpretation of Nature*. Trans. Jonathan Bennett. Np.:N.p. 2005: 1. PDF; Original Latin: "Qui de natura, tanquam de re explorata, pronuntiare ausi sunt, sive hoc ex animi fiducia fecerint sive ambitiose et more professorio, maximis illi philosophiam et scientias detrimentis affecere. Ut enim ad fidem faciendam validi, ita etiam ad inquisitionem extinguendam et abrumpendam efficaces fuerunt. Neque virtute propria tantum profuerunt, quantum in hoc nocuerunt, quod aliorum virtutem corruperint et perdiderint." From: Bacon, Francis. *The Works of Francis Bacon*. Frommann, 1858: 151. Print. (Praefatio II).

¹¹⁴ Shan, Han. *The Surangama Sutra (Leng Yen Ching)*. New Delhi: Munshirm Manoharlal Pub, 2001: 60. Print.

law is structured and unfolded in the narrative thus by its own structural design invites a polyphonic approach so as to prevent such stagnation on the threshold of the path.

The clash of worlds gave man the means and the motivation to transform the village into a city, and to attempt to build it further while continuing the grounding of its foundation. This construction work nevertheless lacked direction. Only the downward grounding force could then be clearly seen by all. The upward building force, on the other hand, was more diffuse, lacking a precise reference and a guidance pointing out the goal that the building of the city should take. The Law is what provides such a guidance, and the mission given at Pentecost is aimed at giving access to its doorway, the triune Sanctuary, to all dwellings of the city, so that all its inhabitants would see the entry to the path and participate in its clearing. The echo between the triune Sanctuary and its remote extensions can indeed ensure that the path is not only contemplated, but also cleared and walked. The edification of the city can now be aimed at a precise goal: an **ascent** toward the direction pointed out by the law. The building force of the faithful can be applied to the furthering of the construction of the city and to the clearing of the path, both complementary parts necessary for the progress of man toward the appropriation of his essential being. This furthering is nonetheless only the extension of the re-flection that began with Adam, that is, man's search to have a clearer view of the Φύσις into which he is thrown. The building of the city gives him new means to see beyond his past horizon, to perceive new minute details of the Φύσις of the universe in the flow of which he is caught and of the meta-φύσις of which he is a builder, details that can lead him to discover the nature of his essential being.

This vision, whose truthfulness is progressively enhanced by the grounding of the city, nevertheless only becomes meaningful once man sees what role is intended for him within the "great game." Not all will follow the path, as some will choose the comfort of an idle life in the low dwellings of the city, but those who undertake to know and pursue their destiny will take their place as actors of the Φύσις, as men who use the means given by the Τέχνη to accompany the Φύσις, rather than simply letting themselves be carried by its flow or vainly oppose it. The law is the northern star that prevents them from straying from the path, a sign *in* language

that helps the growth and the refining of language. Once this sign has been clearly seen and followed, man may then with peace of mind continue his work, calmly repeating the wise verses of the Lithuanian poet:

*Bet tu, o Viešpatie, man
kelią
Parodęs, uždraudei sapnus,
Ir aš, pažinęs šventą valią,
Einu, Apveizdai paklusnus.*

But you, O Lord, the path
You showed me, banned
dreams, And I, having
learned the divine will, I go,
obedient to the
Providence.¹¹⁵

Man's search for truth will continue; the edification of the city will follow its course, and the refining of the Sanctuary will go on. The *ek-stasis* following Pentecost has wide-ranging effects on man's language and the evolution of his being. The ascent guided by the path will bring the inhabitants of the city to always higher grounds, to worlds that will become more and more distant from the earth. This nevertheless does not imply a clouding of these worlds, as the grounding force may still ensure that there is a proper basis for the new constructions. This distance from the earth is neither inherently positive nor negative, but it marks the building up of a tension between world and earth. The ascent, the building of the city to higher meta-physical levels, nonetheless is not a direct ascent "toward the heavens" or toward the Deity itself, contrary to what the commonly used religious metaphor may imply. It may actually well be the opposite.

The ascent may not be an ascent toward the Deity, but rather away from it, that is, a departure from the earth, which is a direct creation of the Deity and its gift to man to rule over, toward increasingly high worlds which, on the other hand, are the work of man's hands and will. The tension originating from the present *ek-stasis* is thus one between two creations: one made by the Deity and another made by man. The end of the path and the result of this tension will be the subject of the next chapter, which will be the last step of our exploration of the (hi)story of language and being in the narrative. Before this, one must nonetheless first be

¹¹⁵ TBA. Maironis. "Pavasario balsai." *Lietuvių klasikinės literatūros antologija*. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.

reminded that the ascent as depicted in the previous pages can only take place if men take the initiative to bridge the stat-ions present before and after the Pentecost *ek-stasis*. Otherwise, if man only leaps between them, the outcome will be significantly different.

6.2.6.2 The leap between bridges, worlds, and laws

The possibility given to every man to bridge the stat-ions also implies the possibility for him to fail to do so, or even to fail to perceive the choice altogether. No matter what he chooses, the city of being will ultimately know a profusion of bridges, through which ex-changes and trans-lations will occur between different houses and different worlds. The bridging of the houses nevertheless does not imply a bridging of stat-ions. Indeed, trans-lations and ex-changes can occur without putting the worlds in which they occur in tension, and perhaps even without perceiving the nature of these different houses, or the nature of the tensions themselves. Trans-lation may be seen and performed as an everyday act of mere transcoding between languages, so as to communicate information. Trans-lation, however, can be seen as failing if it is not guided by a vision; if it is not performed with a direction, aimed at bringing different worlds to a precise destination, and is instead a mere nearly random flow between houses. Even more important is the fact that the present stat-ion's most prominent characteristic, what distinguishes it from the previous one, is that it not only marks the appearance of ex-changes, but also the emergence of a plurality of tensions and ex-changes. The two elements are nonetheless not necessarily perceived, and man may find himself thrown into a city replete with bridges and ex-changes, and yet fail to notice the importance of their plurality, which constitutes the key to the appropriation of the present *ek-stasis*.

One can thus be the mediator of ex-changes between houses and yet only leap between stat-ions, rather than bridge them. The previous stat-ion allowed man to put two different houses in tension, whereas the present one potentially permits him to create more of these tensions, and thereby put the tensions themselves in tension with one another, unconcealing their nature. He may nonetheless find himself content with being a mere spectator of the ex-changes that occur within the city. He may benefit from

them, and even come to experience the plurality of bridges, forgetting himself in their readiness-to-hand and everydayness, which allow him to experience every house of the city, without effort, and without putting into question the foundation of his homeworld.

To bridge the stat-ions, and thereby to unconceal the nature of the tension between houses is the key opening the possibility of the clash of worlds and the clash of laws leading to the city's ascent. This opening can only occur when man perceives the contrast between: the single tension between two houses of the previous stat-ion on the one hand, and their plurality offered by the present stat-ion on the other. If he forgets his previous facticity, the previous stat-ion, he will find himself engulfed in a city that will indeed be the *locus* of a plurality of tensions, but he will fail to notice the difference between worlds, and the role that the tensions between them play in man's destiny. If man does not perceive the nature of the tensions established by the bridges between houses, he cannot see that the city needs a deeper grounding into the earth, a more solid foundation. Without the clashes of worlds and laws, the city will remain a random organic structure, growing without direction nor planning. No ascent will occur, and man will remain oblivious to his own power, to the gift that could make him an architect of the city, rather than its prisoner.

The vehicle accommodates a multitude of individual men, each of whom is given the choice between bridging and leaping between stat-ions. The city will therefore always shelter both bridgers and leapers, spectators and actors, travelers and recluses. A part of its inhabitants may strive to make it ascend toward its destin-ation, while others may build aimlessly, or even voluntarily impede the work of those following the path pointed out by the Sanctuary. The leapers are nonetheless not condemned to remain so. At all times until the day of their death, they can change their choice and join the bridgers in their endeavor, which is the unveiling of man's destiny, as individuals and as mankind as a whole.

Chapter 7

The End of Language

The Pentecost station, the subject of the previous chapter, set up the stage for the last step of the evolution of man's language. It initiated the transformation of the village of being into a coherent city, with its population finally discovering its full extent. A harmonious growth, and a cohesion between the different dwellings is now possible, both allowed by the building of bridges and by the unconcealment of their nature. The resulting clashes of worlds and laws also allow the unveiling of the direction that the city's building is to take: upward, ascending toward the skies, the direction pointed out by the Law.

The building of the city and the clashes are nonetheless a long-lasting process, one that will only end with the end of the earth itself, at the end of days. The reader of the narrative, to whom the Bible is directly addressed, is located between the aftermath of Pentecost and the final judgment. From the point of view of the meta-narrative, the reader is one of the dwellers and builders of the city of being. He is personally invited to participate in the clashes of worlds and laws, and to contribute to the ascent of the city, but following Pentecost, man will not receive further guidance. The vehicle will not be carried to a new station, and men will have to share the burden of bringing it toward its destination. The Law, revealed in its entirety soon after Pentecost, will nevertheless offer man some clues concerning the end of the city, that is, what should its ultimate form be at the end of times, and what purpose does the vehicle serve in the accomplishment of man's destiny. This

will be the subject of this last chapter, where these clues will be followed so as to unfold the meta-narrative of the end of language and to discover the final role it plays in man's (hi)story.

After examining the few elements concerning language that are present in the narrative of the end of days, in the book of Revelation, the meta-narrative of language and being between the aftermath of Pentecost and the end of times will be interpolated from these clues. The logical evolution of the city will be described, and hypotheses concerning its final form will be proposed and evaluated. Ultimately, it will be shown that the city's purpose nonetheless does not lie in its "completed" form, at the end of its building and transformation into a "perfect" city. The city's purpose is rather fulfilled when man sees its limits, its outer wall, the border between language and what lies beyond it, a border that is named *silence*. The vehicle will be brought to the limit of the paved road, and it will stop there, but man's destiny will bring him beyond. The end of the city will become the beginning of a new journey for man, one that will lead him to take distance from the city and to venture into what it faces, the country, nonetheless without being severed from it.

The relation and tension between city and country will represent the last path that man must take in order to fulfill his destiny and become a conscious manifestation of divine being. This event will not only describe something that will occur to man in the end of days. The act of standing on the wall of silence and man's distanciation from his house of being will be shown to be the "end" of language, its purpose, which is accessible to any man, at any point of man's (hi)story. The end of language is part of the destiny of each individual man, and part of the destiny of mankind as a whole. This end is not to be found in the vehicle itself, but rather in the relationship that man has to establish with the vehicle and what lies beyond it. This relationship can be established while the vehicle is at any station, but each new station only makes it more and more obvious to man. Each new station, examined in the previous chapters, unfolded new parts of the nature of man's world and of the essence of his being. Some men will find the end at the beginning of the vehicle's journey, while others will need the guidance provided by other stations. Others may never find it, no matter how obvious this end will become.

For the reader of the narrative, however, the vehicle already is at its last station, and man's destiny is outlined in the last book of the Scriptures, waiting to be seen and appropriated. The reader has already been given more guidance than many men who already returned to the ground. He is shown what his final destination can be: the joy of an existence sustained by the tree of life in the New Jerusalem, or the torment of the lake of fire of hell. The joy of man's essential being, or the misery of being forever a prisoner of his own world, deprived of any nearness to divine being. Thus will the (hi)story of language and being end.

7.1 The narrative of the end of language

Compared with the previous episodes, the end of language is extremely unostentatious in the narrative dedicated to the end of time. Following the first Pentecost and the emergence of the narrative within itself, only a handful of passages give us hints concerning the way language evolves and affects the life of mankind, and what role it will play at the end of man's (hi)story. The following review of the narrative will thus be brief and, after a succinct outline of the events of the Apocalypse, it will mainly be focused on the linguistic situation at the very end of the narrative.

After an indeterminate period of time, man's (hi)story draws toward its conclusion, and the time of the "revelation" has come: the ἀπο-κάλυψις [apo-kálypsis], the great "un-covering." In the heavens, there is a great multitude, "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (Rev 7:9–10¹). Some, such as Steven Goldsmith, see in such proclamations the sign of an "univocalization" of mankind, where its plurality is "instantaneously transfigured into a postapocalyptic social and linguistic identity,"² as the "distilling of social polyphony to the

¹ "ἐκ παντὸς ἔθνους καὶ φυλῶν καὶ λαῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν ἐστῶτες ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἁρνίου περιβεβλημένους στολὰς λευκάς καὶ φοῖνικες ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτῶν, καὶ κράζουσιν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγοντες· ἡ σωτηρία τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ τῷ ἁρνίῳ." (Rev 7:9–10).

² Goldsmith, Steven. *Unbuilding Jerusalem: Apocalypse and Romantic*

purity of one ritual voice,”³ but nothing in the narrative would seem to support such an “univocalization,” or such a unique identity. On the contrary, it explicitly mentions the conservation of the distinction between different peoples and languages.

The proclamation could be paralleled with the miracle of Pentecost, where the disciples spoke in unison, but each in a different language, as a polytonal voice rather than a monotonal one. Thus, at this point, no single language seems to hold sway over heaven, and its linguistic situation seems very similar to the one prevailing on earth, contrary to the fantasies of a “perfect language,” which arose from the imagination of interpreters, without basis in the narrative, such as the one envisioned by Samuel Hopkins, who considered that the language of heaven would have “less ambiguity and danger of being misunderstood than could be done before.”⁴ On Earth, on the other hand, the Seven Seals are successively broken, the Seven Trumpets are sounded, the Seven Bowls are emptied, and all sorts of disasters lay waste on the land, killing a large part of mankind. The Beast is allowed to conquer the earth, and “authority was given it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation” (Rev 13:7⁵). The mention of tribes and nations, which occurs several times in the book of Revelation, reinforces the idea that the diversity of peoples and languages is maintained, and that no single language or people dominates either the heavens or the earth.

The dead are then brought out from their graves and mankind is brought to judgment. It is done according to, and *in* language: “on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Mat 12:36–37⁶). This judgment is not arbitrary, as it is based on precise accounts: “the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done” (Rev 20:12⁷), books among which is the aforementioned

Representation. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993: 58. Print.

³ Ibid.: 58.

⁴ Ibid.: 57.

⁵ “ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ ἔθνος.” (Rev 13:7).

⁶ “λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶν ῥῆμα ἀργὸν ὃ λαλήσουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀποδώσουσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως· ἐκ γὰρ τῶν λόγων σου δικαιωθήσῃ, καὶ ἐκ τῶν λόγων σου καταδικασθήσῃ.” (Mat 12:36–37).

⁷ “ἐκρίθησαν οἱ νεκροὶ ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν.”

“Book of Life.” Those whose name was not found in this book are then thrown into the lake of fire, and the (hi)story of heaven and earth is then complete.

Following this, comes the end of man’s (hi)story: the earth and the heavens that were created on the first day now pass away and are made anew. The Holy City, a New Jerusalem, comes down from heaven, and the men who escape the lake of fire will now live in its midst. The city has “a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel” (Rev 21:12⁸) are inscribed. The life within its walls differs significantly from the life on the previous earth:

The city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it, and its gates shall never be shut by day—and there shall be no night there; they shall bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. (Rev 21:23–26⁹)

This would seem to indicate that nations are preserved as distinct groups on the new earth, but no mention is ever made of the possible preservation of their languages (as *langue*). An instance of language (as *langage*) is nonetheless recorded by the narrative:

Through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and

(Rev 20:12).

⁸ “ἔχουσα τεῖχος μέγα καὶ ὑψηλόν, ἔχουσα πυλῶνας δώδεκα καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς πυλῶσιν ἀγγέλους δώδεκα καὶ ὀνόματα ἐπιγεγραμμένα, ἃ ἐστὶν [τὰ ὀνόματα] τῶν δώδεκα φυλῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ” (Rev 21:12).

⁹ “καὶ ἡ πόλις οὐ χρειάν ἔχει τοῦ ἡλίου οὐδὲ τῆς σελήνης ἵνα φαίνωσιν αὐτῇ, ἡ γὰρ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφώτισεν αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς τὸ ἄρνιον. καὶ περιπατήσουσιν τὰ ἔθνη διὰ τοῦ φωτὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς φέρουσιν τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν εἰς αὐτήν, καὶ οἱ πυλῶνες αὐτῆς οὐ μὴ κλεισθῶσιν ἡμέρας, νύξ γὰρ οὐκ ἔσται ἐκεῖ, καὶ οἴσουσιν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰς αὐτήν.” (Rev 21:23–26).

his name shall be on their foreheads (Rev 22:2–4¹⁰)

As the Revelation of the end of times occurs in a vision of St John the Evangelist, he is guided by angels who speak to him. Outside of this revelation process that occurs before the events take place, the aforementioned name written on the forehead of the inhabitants of the city is the only instance of “language use” mentioned by the narrative after the descent of the New Jerusalem. Oral speech seems to appear unnecessary there, and the only human action mentioned is the silent worship of God and the Lamb. The silent proclamation of the name, inscribed on the most visible part of their body, is enough, and thus ends the (hi)story of man in the narrative.

7.2 The meta-narrative of the end of language and being

途中受用底，	One who can take action on the road
似虎靠山；	Is like a tiger in the mountains;
世諦流布底，	One immersed in worldly understanding
如猿在檻。	Is like a monkey in a cage.

— The Blue Cliff Record, 39th case¹¹

The scarcity of information concerning the end of language in the narrative will force us to proceed to an interpolation, uncovering the evolution of the city of being between the period following the Pentecost and the descent of the New Jerusalem. The narrative tells us that up until the judgment day, the city of being is preserved. It has not collapsed into a monolithic fortress, nor has it been left in ruins or wasted away with all the devastation induced by the earthly plagues.

¹⁰ “ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ξύλον ζωῆς ποιοῦν καρποὺς δώδεκα, κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον ἀποδιδούν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ φύλλα τοῦ ξύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν. καὶ πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι. καὶ ὁ θρόνος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσται, καὶ οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ καὶ ὄψονται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.” (Rev 22:2–4).

¹¹ Original Chinese from: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集 (上)》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司，2005：467。； English translation from: *The Blue Cliff Record*. Shambhala Publications, 2005: 240. Print.

Contrary to the earth, the city of being and its world(s) have not been the direct target of the divine wrath, but as the city exists because of its dwellers, it will necessarily feel its effects, in an indirect manner. As a large part of mankind will disappear, parts of numerous houses will be left without their supporting pillars, and thus large sections of them will collapse and fall into oblivion. The Apocalypse marks a change of seasons: man's summer is nearing its end. The autumn wind now begins to blow upon the world-tree, and its leaves begin to wither and fall, returning to the earth. The destiny of the city of being, however, is not to be found in its *end*, in a temporal sense, but rather in its *end*, in the second sense of the word: in its purpose, in what it is aimed at. The city of being is only a means, only a vehicle carrying man on the path toward his destiny. This destiny is not the destination of the path traced by the vehicle. The end of the path is not the end (as purpose) of the vehicle. To see the end of the city of being, one should not look at its temporal end, but rather try to see what its end is, what its goal is. Man's destiny is therefore to be found in the travel and in the path itself, rather than in the vehicle's destination. This destination, the end of times, will thus be put aside so that the end of the city of being, that is, its place in man's fulfillment of his own destiny, can be examined.

7.2.1 The end of the city of being

After the completion of the triune Sanctuary and the transformation of the village into a city, man is given a direction toward which he should focus his building efforts. The clash of worlds and the clash of laws can be initiated, and man can build the city to increasingly higher levels while strengthening and broadening its earthly foundations. The narrative nonetheless remains silent concerning man's achievements at the end of days. Will men find the willpower and the humility necessary for them to work together for the ascent of their common world, or will they disregard the Sanctuary and fail to elevate themselves away from the earth? The narrative does not give us enough information to unambiguously answer this question. It nonetheless teaches us that the clash of worlds will still be ongoing until the very end of man's life on earth, something that is implied by the continuation of the co-existence of a multitude of houses of being within the city.

If the clash of worlds continues until the end of man's life on earth, it would mean that the city is still being built at that time and that it is not a "complete" structure yet. This shows that the completion of the city is not part of its destiny. It would therefore be vain to search for the city's purpose in its final state, as the city itself is a means that never ends, unceasingly offering man a chance to fulfill his destiny. Why then do men continue to build it until the very end? Ideally, it would seem that they should not have to, and that it is not an inherent part of their destiny. It is only because they fail to see its purpose that the city continues to be constructed, always larger and higher. The best way to come to realize the nature of this failure is to plunge ourselves in the potential telos of the building process, imagining where it can ultimately lead man. The examination of the ideal scenario, that is, a straight ascent following the direction pointed out by the Sanctuary, will show us why this upward movement, this building up of a tension between earth and world, is only a means, and toward what end does it guide man.

If man fully exploits the potential of the clash of worlds, it will continually refine his vision of the universe, as the combination of Φύσις and meta-φύσις. The clash will highlight the inadequacies of his world and incite him to improve it, using other worlds and his *logos* to reshape his house of being. By becoming conscious of the role that the world plays in man's life, and in the accomplishment of his destiny, he can greatly enlarge the horizon of his work, of his use of the Τέχνη. Until then, man used his technical and poetic skills to transform his house of being, and to create new portions of it. The worldly consciousness now gives him a vision of something new: of the fact that man may not only create and shape signs, but that he may also transform the entire architecture of the house, and that he may even build another completely.

Man can change his relationship with language, and begin to wrestle with it. Man's relationship with his dwelling forever remains one in which both act as master and servant of the other. Before the clash, the evolution of man's house is nonetheless largely organic. It is a disorderly sum of countless acts of *poiesis* and manipulations of signs by generations of dwellers, a pile that is the product of a combination of Φύσις and Τέχνη, but as remarked by Wilhelm Von Humboldt: "A people could, by inner illumination and favorable external circumstances, impart so different a

form to the language handed down to them that it would thereby turn into a wholly other, wholly new language.”¹² With a worldly consciousness, man can now see that just as he can shape individual signs, he may also transform and determine the architecture of the whole house. The organic pile can become the subject of a plan, which can follow the way pointed out by the Sanctuary, or go against it.

A famous example of such deliberate planning may be found in the “newspeak” of George Orwell’s dystopian novel *1984*, which describes how a totalitarian government could try to control its subjects’ mind by reforming its language:

Don’t you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten.¹³

This consciousness may nonetheless also be used to expand rather than to “narrow the range of thought.” It may be used to unveil man’s essential being rather than to conceal it. The realization of the possibility to shape a house as a whole, according to a plan, could induce a revolution in both man’s earthly and worldly life. The narrative does not give any indication concerning the amount of time that separates the end of days from the time of the Pentecost, so the city could potentially be constructed for thousands or tens of thousands of years, leaving ample time for men to devise a plan and meticulously execute it.

One of the purposes of such a language planning could be language optimization, the maximizing of its efficiency and accuracy. This means optimizing the space and the way the sign-blocks of the house are arrayed and linked with each other. First, it could imply an optimization of the number of elementary signs used to build the house: the greater the number of words of a language, the easier it is to pinpoint very specific meanings, but the smaller

¹² Quoted by Heidegger in: Heidegger, Martin. *On the Way to Language*. New York: HarperCollins, 1982: 136. Print.

¹³ Orwell, George. *1984*. Plume, 2003: 53. Print.

the number, the easier it is to learn and to share with everyone.¹⁴ This question of optimization could also be applied to signifiers only, or to a specific medium. In the case of writing, different “systems” offer different advantages. An ideographic system such as the one used to write the Chinese language, for example, takes considerably more time to master than the Roman alphabet, but it also presents unique properties: the fact that each word was written with one logogram, whose meaning was disconnected from its pronunciation, induced a remarkable endurance of these signifiers, which can stay recognizable and virtually unchanged for thousands of years, whereas the phonetic basis of alphabetic systems renders a prolonged preservation of complete words more unlikely. In the meta-narrative, this would mean that the way sign-blocks are fashioned can significantly affect their durability, and their capacity to resist the onslaught of the heavenly elements, the work of time.

Furthermore, man could also reshape every aspect of the house. He could change a language’s grammar, either making it simpler to use by eliminating irregularities and systematizing its structures, or making it richer by increasing its complexity and creating a larger palette for his expression. Man could choose to reduce the language’s ambiguities to decrease the possibilities of misunderstanding, but he could also decide to deliberately create them, to play with multiplicities of meanings or simply remind man that the world is only re-presentation, only meta-physical. Doing this, a single man may have the power to change the world of all the dwellers of his house of being. As noted by A. Schuster, “a happy nomenclature has sometimes been more powerful than rigorous logic in allowing a new train of thought to be quickly and generally accepted.”¹⁵ What is true for a “nomenclature,” that is, basic sign-blocks, is even truer concerning the house’s general architecture. It will be considerably easier for man to perceive and accomplish his destiny within a house where it is already clearly represented, where it occupies a central place, and where the whole architecture of the building is designed to bring man’s attention toward it.

¹⁴ Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics*. Indiana University Press, 1976: 44. Print.

¹⁵ Quote from: Ogden, Charles Kay, I. A. Richards, and Bronislaw Malinowski. *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism*. Harcourt, Brace & World, 1923: 87. Print.

The consciousness of man's power to shape his world is also not restricted to the confines of individual houses. Man may one day realize that he can shape or even completely re-build the city as a whole. Man could decide to create or annihilate certain parts of it, and even wipe out entire houses. He could also establish links between buildings, and organize the ex-changes between them. The *ek-stases* associated with the village and the clash of worlds indeed showed him the necessity of a plurality of houses, which breaks the *lethe* of man's worldly facticity and incites him to improve the building of his world. Recognizing this need for the city, man may see that by a careful planning, he can himself preserve and even increase its diversity. By maximizing the differences between worlds and regulating the ex-changes between them, he may ensure that not only the city will not fuse into a monolithic single dwelling, but that it will also give mankind the largest possible horizon, the most complete and precise vision of the Φύσις.

The upward movement of the city, that is, its ascent toward the direction pointed out by the Sanctuary, increases the tension between earth and world, between the ground and the top of man's construction. The more skillful and all-encompassing is the planning of this movement, the greater will the tension be. For man, this tension is the only way by which he can distance himself from the earth, and from the Φύσις in general. He cannot escape the world, nor the pull of the earth, but he can elevate himself through the building of his world. Through his own creations, products of the Τέχνη, he may distance himself from the divine creation, the Φύσις. If he fails to care for the ground, this distance can be increased with little effort, with man's world departing in the clouds. Such a distance is nonetheless meaningless without tension. The purpose of the ascent, when true to its nature, is to give man a clearer view of the universe: the higher he climbs, the larger his horizon will be. In this case, his vision of the Φύσις will become clearer as well, but he will lose sight of it entirely if he finds himself caught in the clouds, and he would then only see his own creations. With a proper tension, on the other hand, the purpose of the city can be revealed to man, and he may come to recognize that the more he strives to create his world, and the larger his horizon is, the more insignificant will his creation, fruit of his Τέχνη, appear in front of the divine Φύσις.

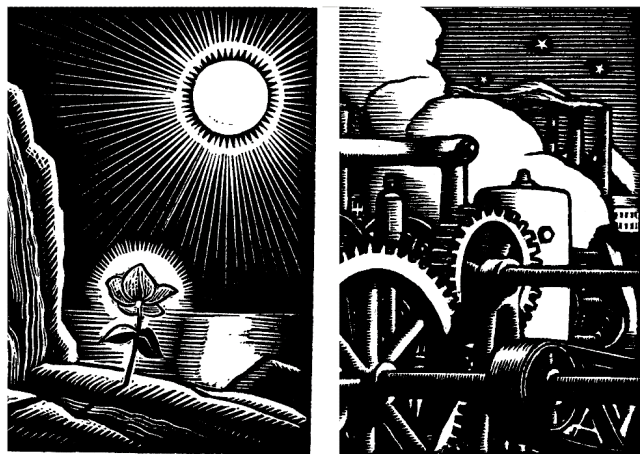


Fig. 24 *The dance of Φύσις and Τέχνη*. The Τέχνη stands in front of the Φύσις, but the two are not destined to be foes. They are rather called to dance with one another, each thereby manifesting its peculiar nature while it highlights the gifts of its partner. The Φύσις leads the dance, as it carries the Τέχνη on its shoulders, but it is through the Τέχνη that the beauty of the Φύσις can shine, and the harmony of the dance would remain invisible without it. Man, as the master of the Τέχνη, only has to willingly accompany the Φύσις, rather than to oppose or merely submit to it.

The tension is part of man's destiny and it is the nexus of his relationship with being. Dürckheim, using a different terminology, well described such a tension:

For the man, who must become autonomous, the essential fusion, ineluctable, with Being, nonetheless also induces a danger: he may not wish to leave this original homeland, which is found in the primordial unity. Being, the Great Mother, do not let him separate himself from her, or always calls him back within her. Man is unceasingly teared between the force pushing him toward the freedom of an independent form (Yang), and the return to the protecting maternal embrace (Yin). In order to become an authentic person, he must gain

his autonomy and separate himself from the primordial One, whose maternal embrace enfolds him and takes him back. To become an authentic man, however, he must never lose, even in his independence, contact with the maternal depth that nourishes him. This essential theme of becoming human comes back at each stage of his evolution. The more elevated is the stage of this evolution, the greater is the tension, but also the obligation to join, so as to restore the original human unity, the maternal depth and the manly autonomy.¹⁶

Man's life in the world, in the meta-narrative, begins with Adam's building of the house of being, as a consequence of the naming of the animals in the narrative. This event, initiated by the Deity, is what took man away from the unity of the Φύσις. It marked the birth of man's *ego*, and thereby the advent of the semblance of a subject-object relationship between the Φύσις and man, who will now dwell in another realm: the meta-φύσις. The world, which then evolved into a large city, is nevertheless only a means. The vehicle carries man further and further away from the earth from which he came, but it is not meant to separate man from it, quite the contrary. The tension between the earth and the world, Φύσις and Τέχνη, the ground and the city built upon it, is aimed at showing man the nature of his being so that he may become a willing manifestation of it. The greater the tension, the higher the city, the more visible will this nature be.

As noted by Dürckheim, however: "The accomplishment of

¹⁶ TBA. "Die ursprüngliche und unabdingbare Verwobenheit mit dem Sein bedeutet auch die Gefahr, daß der Mensch, der zur Eigenständigkeit bestimmt ist, wenn er seine Urheimat entdeckt, nicht mehr aus der Ur-Eins herauskommt. Das Sein als die Große Mutter läßt ihn dann nicht los oder zieht ihn immer wieder in sich zurück. Der Mensch steht immer in der Spannung zwischen dem Drang in die Freiheit eigenständiger Form (Yang) und dem Zug zurück (Yin) in das mütterlich-bergende Ur. Um wirklich Person zu werden, muß er eigenständig werden und sich von der ihn mütterlich umfangenden und immer wieder zurückrufenden Ur-Ganzheit lösen. Um aber in aller Eigenständigkeit ein ganzer Mensch zu bleiben, darf er doch die Verbindung mit dem nährenden Muttergrund nie ganz verlieren. Dies ist ein Urthema menschlichen Werdens, das sich auf allen Stufen seiner Entwicklung neu stellt. Je höher die Stufe, desto größer die Spannung, aber auch die Notwendigkeit der *Integration* von mütterlichem „Grund“ und männlicher Eigenständigkeit, die die Ureinheit im Menschen wiederherstellt." From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Vom doppelten Ursprung des Menschen*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag, 2009: 128. Print.

oneself does not occur naturally to man, as it does to plants. It is an active reply to the calling: 'I have named you by your name, because you are mine.'¹⁷' The Deity gave man his name and gave him his world when it commanded him to name other creatures. Through this, man is given a unique opportunity to play an active role in the creation, and not only be carried by the flow of the Φύσις. This opportunity implies the need for a resoluteness, necessary in order for man to fulfill his destiny and consciously play the role assigned to him in the Φύσις. The German thinker also remarks that man nevertheless often fails to recognize and answer to the divine calling: "But who knows his own name? Man fails to grow to the stature that is destined to him."¹⁸ To ignore one's own name is to fail to re-present one's true nature, what one is meant to be, as part of the world. It is to fail to see one's place within the universe re-presented in this world.

In the narrative, the Deity itself points out such a failure in the book of Revelation: "I know your works; you have the name of being alive, and you are dead."¹⁹ (Rev 3:1). The Deity also declares in the same book that some men will one day receive a divinely revealed name: "To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it."²⁰ (Rev 2:17). In the meta-narrative, it implies that for some men, their true re-presentation within the house(s), their place in it, will be directly shown to them in the future, as a sign-block within the house.²¹ No matter what this name is, or to whom and when it will be revealed, it symbolizes the incarnation of man's destiny, and his calling to fulfill it. This calling is manifold.

¹⁷ TBA. Original German: "Selbstverwirklichung geschieht beim Menschen nicht wie bei der Pflanze von selbst. Sie ist mittätige Antwort auf den Anruf: „Ich habe dich bei deinem Namen gerufen, denn du bist mein." From: Ibid: 121.

¹⁸ TBA. Original German: "Aber wer kennt seinen Namen? Dem Menschen wächst die ihm auf gegebene Gestalt nicht einfach zu." From: Ibid: 121.

¹⁹ "οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα ὅτι ὄνομα ἔχεις ὅτι ζῆς, καὶ νεκρὸς εἶ." (Rev 3:1).

²⁰ "Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις. Τῷ νικῶντι δώσω αὐτῷ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον λευκὴν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων." (Rev 2:17).

²¹ The revelation of man's "true representation" may perhaps occur only once they have dis-covered and fulfilled their destiny, that is, once they have dis-covered their own name, with the white stone only sealing and confirming this fulfillment, but the narrative leaves this question unanswered.

It ultimately is a call for man to become a willing and conscious manifestation of divine being, but in order to do so, man must first contemplate what the horizon of his world is showing him, and see to what end it guides him:

The very personal calling of the experience of being to man, in its unique individuality, leads him toward a new life. It also includes the calling for the return to the fatherland, but it is clearly distinct from it. The man who got lost in the world must return to the house of the Father. Is it to dwell in it and to see his own individuality abolished? It would be oriental. For us, westerners and Christians, man in this homecoming only loses his lost ego, in order to fashion another one, which will be a witness of the Father. It will return to the world — as a person through which the liberating and creating calling of being will resonate”²²

The world elevates man. It takes him away from the earth, but it does so in order to give him a clear vision of what he has lost. Each *ek-stasis* is meant to increase this tension, making the calling to the fatherland always clearer, and always harder to ignore or reject. This calling is not to dissolve one’s *ego* back to the oneness of the Φύσις, otherwise nothing would have been gained through man’s (hi)story. Man’s destiny is rather to dwell in the twilight between earth and world, between Φύσις and Τέχνη, between the oneness of the creation and the duality induced by his own *ego*, where the two can be reconciled while remaining distinct. Before this, however, man must first discover the path leading to this twilight.

The Sanctuary of the meta-narrative, that is, the law of the

²² TBA. Original German: “Der den Menschen in seiner Einmaligkeit, also ganz persönlich und individuell meinende, zu einem neuen Leben verpflichtende Anruf, der in der Seinserfahrung erklingt, ist deutlich von dem auch in ihr enthaltenen Heim-Ruf zu unterscheiden. Der Mensch, der sich in der Welt verloren hat, muß in das Haus des Vaters heimkehren. Um darin zu bleiben und sich als Eigener auszulöschen? Das wäre östlich! Westlich aber und christlich, wie wir es meinen, verliert der Mensch in diesem Heimgang nur sein fremdgegangenes Ich, um nun als Zeuge des Vaters ein neues Ich zu zeugen, das wieder ausgeht in die Welt — als individuelle Person, durch die der Ruf des Seins welt-erlösend und schöpferisch hindurchtönt.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Vom doppelten Ursprung des Menschen*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag, 2009: 121. Print.

narrative, is a construction, a work of language. It guides man by showing him where he must go, within his world. The obedient builders elevated their world according to it, but the Sanctuary nonetheless cannot guide man all the way up to the end, because this end needs what lies beyond the house, beyond the city. The Sanctuary, as a worldly creation, is limited to the confines of the world, and it cannot guide man outside of it. The Sanctuary, like the city itself, is only a means to an end. It is an invitation for man to build up the city, through the clashes of worlds and laws, thereby building up the tension. Sooner or later, the attempt to build an always larger and more perfect house or city will nonetheless show him that building is only a step on the path of destiny, rather than its destin-ation. The more sophisticated and well-crafted man's world is, the more the limits of this world will become visible, and the more the contrast with the *Φύσις* will become flagrant. An impurity or a defect is indeed easier to perceive in a diamond than in a block of clay. Man's realization of the limitations of his world will sooner or later lead the tension to a breaking point. This is when language will start to speak to man, and not only use or be used by him. Heidegger saw this breaking point as a key to unveil the truth of man's being:

But when does language speak itself as language? Curiously enough, when we cannot find the right word for something that concerns us, carries us away, oppresses or encourages us. Then we leave unspoken what we have in mind and, without rightly giving it thought, undergo moments in which language itself has distantly and fleetingly touched us with its essential being.²³

It is when "language breaks off"²⁴ that man may finally see the true extent of his calling, and the destin-ation of the path on which he was led by the Deity, a destin-ation that will lead him beyond the walls of his dwelling. Man may realize that the vehicle will not

²³ Heidegger, Martin. *On the Way to Language*. New York: HarperCollins, 1982: 59. Print; Original German: "Wo aber kommt die Sprache selber als Sprache zum Wort? Seltsamerweise dort, wo wir für etwas, was uns angeht, uns an sich reißt, bedrängt oder befeuert, das rechte Wort nicht finden. Wir lassen dann, was wir meinen, im Ungesprochenen und machen dabei, ohne es recht zu bedenken, Augenblicke durch, in denen uns die Sprache selber mit ihrem Wesen fernher und flüchtig gestreift hat." From: GA 12:151.

²⁴ Ibid.^t: 60; Original German: "Kein ding sei wo das wort gebricht" From: GA 12: 153.

carry him to his destin-ation, but rather only point it out. Once this is clearly seen, in the words of Dürckheim:

The old vision of life constructed a building with the senses, with reason, our consciousness of the values of truth, beauty, and good, our morality of efficiency and good behavior — and a little “religion.” Not only is this building now found to be too small (as if one just needed to add another floor to it), but neither its basis nor its design is now deemed fitting for us. As if we had wings, the old protective cage now appears as what it really is: a prison. To remain in it, because of fear or laziness, would be to betray our essential Being.²⁵

The house of being nevertheless remains what allowed man to walk on the path toward the dis-covery of his essential being in the first place. It was the incubator of man’s being, and it only becomes a prison when man is fully grown, when what was helping his development now hinders it.



Fig. 25 *Out of the shell*. An egg’s shell allows the young bird to grow, but once the creature has completely absorbed the nutrients it contains, and once the shell has become too narrow to allow the bird to move freely,

²⁵ TBA. Original German: “Das Gebäude der alten Weltanschauung — errichtet auf unseren fünf Sinnen, unserem Verstand, unserem Bewußtsein der Werte des Wahren, Schönen und Guten, unserer Ethik vom Leisten und Wohlverhalten und auf etwas »Religion« — ist nicht nur zu eng geworden (so, als müßten wir nur noch ein Stockwerk hinzufügen), sondern es stimmt in seinen Grundfesten und seiner ganzen Konzeption nicht mehr, so als seien wir Vögel, die flügge geworden und den sie bislang schützenden Käfig mit einem Mal als das erleben, was er ist, ein Gefängnis! Bleiben wir aus Bequemlichkeit oder Angst doch darin, dann ist das Verrat an unserem Wesen.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried. *Der Ruf nach dem Meister: Die Bedeutung geistiger Führung auf dem Weg zum Selbst*. Weilheim: O.W. Barth, 1972: 53–54. Print.

comes the time to shatter the protective abode, and the time for the young to dis-cover that birds are not destined to live enclosed in the dwelling they receive from their mother. They are rather called to spread their wings, and to fly toward the heavens.

Thus, the “end” of the city of being is not the completion of its building. The city’s end is reached when the tension created by its ascent leads man to perceive the existence of another step that is necessary for him to take in order to appropriate his essential being. The city is a ladder, meant to elevate him and show him his destin-ation, where he is meant to go, and what he is meant to be. Once a man has realized this, he can stop building the city, throw away the ladder, or at least release his grasp on it. He can now contemplate the city’s limits, and the fact that no matter how hard he works to further its ascent, his destiny will not end within its walls. He can stop looking at the earth and the city itself for a moment, and he can stand on the limit of the city, on its outer wall. There, standing on the edge of language, where it is in contact with its un-essence, man may begin to see that he must seek and appropriate what lies beyond.



Fig. 26 *Standing on the wall*. When man has discovered the walls of the city, and climbed on top of them, he can finally see that the limits of his world are not the limits of the universe. Unable to depart from the city, he nonetheless stands on the edge of the walls, clinging to them but striving to perceive what lays beyond.

Man cannot answer the call inviting him to return to his fatherland, to the unity of the Φύσις, through the ascent of his world, the building of the city, as the two are fundamentally incompatible. The world is the realm of the “multitude of things”²⁶ (萬物), whereas the Φύσις is where “there is not even one thing” (一物也無²⁷). Man first needs the city, and he needs to see the Φύσις as “things,” before he can realize that these are mere representations, pointing the way toward where “words break off and no thing may be.”²⁸ The city gives man sight of the limits of his own *logos*, and it allows him to perceive the call inviting him to his fatherland, from which he departed when he gained his *ego* and began to dwell in a house of being, but the path that led man away from his fatherland is now covered by the building-blocks of the city itself. Man built over the path, and he has now lost sight of the way back. The sight of a large horizon, which is made possible by the high-towering nature of the city, nonetheless offers man a chance to find a new way home, one which will lead him away from the man-made construction. It is by standing on the limit of the city that man will see this path, beyond language, beyond the house of being. As S^t Ephrem advised us:

²⁶ TBA. Original Classical Chinese: “無名天地之始有名萬物之母。” From: 阿部吉雄。《新釈漢文大系〈7〉老子 莊子上卷》。東京：明治書院，1966：11。（道德經 1）

²⁷ TBA. Original Classical Chinese from: 久須本文雄。《禪語入門》。東京：大法輪閣，1982。N. Pag.

²⁸ Heidegger, Martin. *On the Way to Language*. New York: HarperCollins, 1982: 60. Print; Original German: “Kein ding sei wo das wort gebricht.” From: GA 12: 153.

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ	Blessed he that hath surrounded his hearing with the wall of silence ²⁹
---------------------------------------	---

The walls of the city are the surface where language comes in contact with what is outside language, and it will form the threshold of the path back home, a path of silence.

7.2.2 The wall of silence

The reason explaining why the narrative is silent concerning the end of language would seem to be that language ends in silence, and silence is what should not be spoken of. As the German philosopher said: “to talk and write about silence is what produces the most obnoxious chatter.”³⁰ Man nonetheless must first learn to talk, and speak or read about silence before he can perceive its true nature, and commit himself to it. To be silent about silence, “that would be authentic saying,”³¹ says the master, and this is precisely what the narrative does. Before we ourselves reach man’s destin-ation, we must first find the way, and language is the source of light that will help us complete this task. We ourselves must see the wall before we can peer beyond it.

The banality of the word “silence,” should not blind us to the manifold and complex nature of what it points to. First, one should be reminded that silence is not just an absence. It is not the absence of noise, nor of sounds or language. In the narrative, up to its very end, in the New Jerusalem, the life of man never is one of stillness and of absence of sound. The universe is never frozen,

²⁹ Emphasis added. Translation from: Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847: 110. Print; Original Syriac from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1961: 5. Print.

³⁰ Heidegger, Martin. *On the Way to Language*. New York: HarperCollins, 1982: 52. Print; Original German: “weil das Reden und Schreiben über das Schweigen das verderblichste Gerede veranlaßt. . .” From GA 12: 144.

³¹ Ibid.: 53. Original German: “F Wer vermöchte es, einfach vom Schweigen zu schweigen? / J Dies müßte das eigentliche Sagen sein . . .” From GA 12: 144.

and the very nature of the Φύσις implies movements and noise. Progressively, step by step, the narrative of the book of Revelation shows that the role played by written names becomes increasingly important as the narrative draws to its end, with names inscribed on stones or on the flesh of man.³² It also shows a fading away of oral speech, but the end of times also marks the coming of silence into the foreground of the narrative, as something that will enter into dialogue with man's world, rather than supplant it.

In the universe of the narrative, this silence first comes as a fading away of speech, but not as a fading away of language altogether. May language be present where silence holds sway? Yes, but only in one form: precisely the one chosen by the Deity at the end, that is, as openly visible writing. The names, carved on stones or flesh, are the signs of a presence of language, and yet, this presence does not imply any "use" of language. Silence, of the ears and of the mind, is indeed incompatible with the "use" of language, but not with its sole presence. The written names, openly visible to those facing their horizon, do not need to be spoken or read to be present. Man can see them without leaving a state of perfect silence, without reading them, without seeing them as sign-blocks, parts of his house of being. Contrary to its oral counterpart, the written word does not suffer from a spatial or temporal evanescence: it remains, even when unuttered or unseen, forever present, hidden in silence. It does not depend on man to exist and it remains in the flow of time. At the end of man's (hi)story, the narrative tells us that language is present in this form, but it does not indicate any active "use" of language. Language is present, but forced to silence by both man and the Deity.

In the meta-narrative, to be silent is to refrain from furthering the edification of the house of being, and to refrain from looking at the sign-blocks composing it. The silent dweller tries not to peer through the sign-blocks, as this would make him see the universe as a mere set of "things." Instead, he tries to directly perceive the earthly and the heavenly, without reducing them to an aggregate of "things." Yet, he remains within the house, which allows him to ponder these questions. He may begin to feel the limits of his dwelling, touching its enclosure that may now begin to feel like the

³² Rev 2:13, Rev 3:5, Rev 6:8, Rev 13:1, Rev 14:1, Rev 15:2, Rev 17:3, Rev 19:12, Rev 20:15 etc.

impenetrable fence of a prison. Man nonetheless cannot simply exit his dwelling, as he is possessed by language as much as he possesses it. The calling to the fatherland, the earth and the skies, may ultimately lead him beyond, but he has yet to find a way out. For now, being silent is the only way for man to resist the power of his dwelling, and to attempt to transcend its boundaries. This silence is achieved by fleeing from the center of the house, where the transparency of the signs is manifest and their hold on man the strongest, to take refuge on the outer walls of the house or the city. When man stands on the wall of silence, he has not left language behind, but only chooses to be on its edge. He is still a dweller of the city of being, but one who, for a time at least, does not take part in its life, in its growth, and is thus partly breaking free from its grip on his existence. The carved names mentioned in the Revelation narrative are parts of the house, and their presence is sustained without the need of human support due to their written nature, while man may remain on the edge of the wall, silent and oblivious to them.

Silence can nonetheless be twofold. It can either be earthly or worldly. As Dürckheim tells us: “there is two kinds of silence: the silence of death, where nothing moves anymore, and the silence of Life, where nothing can stop the movement of transformation.”³³ The first silence is earthly. It corresponds to the meaning that this word has in the daily life of men, that is, a stillness of the physical, as if time was suspended and the Φύσις frozen. It is often a source of anguish or boredom. It is also commonly associated with death and seen as incompatible with life. The second silence, on the other hand, is the silence *in* the world and *of* the world. Its nature is surprisingly similar to its earthly equivalent. The silence *in* the world indeed also implies a form of stillness, an absence of motion, but one that occurs within the walls of the house of being rather than on the soil of the earth. The two are similar in nature. The effect of this worldly silence nonetheless is radically different. It is not akin to death, but it rather is the purest source of the water of life itself. This silence of life “is above stillness and agitation, of

³³ TBA. Original German: “Es gibt zwei Arten der Stille: die Stille des Todes, wo nichts sich mehr bewegt, und die Stille des Lebens, wo nichts mehr die Bewegung der Verwandlung aufhält.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried. *Der Ruf nach dem Meister: Die Bedeutung geistiger Führung auf dem Weg zum Selbst*. Weilheim: O.W. Barth, 1972: 88. Print.

silence and noise. It expresses the peace that arises in us when the stir of our own heart and those of the outside start to be felt as the background and the instrument of the great peace.”³⁴ It is “a disposition, a state of mind. The roar of the world in it becomes a ‘background noise’ on which the silence becomes conscious and develops itself in its perfection.”³⁵ One can find such a silence of the world, even when one is caught in the rumble and bustle of the earth, and reciprocally, one can be plunged in a perfect silence and tranquility on the earth, and be a prisoner of the unceasing activity of the world, unable to find the silence of life.

The release, the *gelassenheit* of Meister Eckhart and Heidegger, can be compared with the silence of life. It is an inherently worldly phenomenon, even though many will mistakenly search for it on the earth. It can also be compared to the *wú wéi* (無為) of the Daoist philosophers when it is seen as “inaction,” the common English translation of the word, but an inaction in the world which is not necessarily tied to one on the earth. The silence of the world can only be found when one realizes that “the multiplicity that resonates, within us and around us, must make place for silence, so that the voice of the essential being can be heard.”³⁶ Multiplicity is inherent to the nature of the world: a house of being breaks off the oneness of the Φύσις into a multitude of “things.” Each house harbors a multitude of dwellers, and each one of these dwellers possesses a different world-view. Furthermore, each house is itself part of a multiplicity of conflicting worlds that form the city of being. When man stands on the wall of silence, he begins to release this “multiplicity that resonates” so as to clear a space

³⁴ TBA. Original German: “Die Stille des LEBENS ist jenseits von Ruhe und Unruhe, von Stille und Lärm. Sie ist Ausdruck jenes Friedens, der einzieht, wo man beginnt, den Unfrieden im eigenen Herzen und in der Welt als Hintergrund und schöpferisches Agens der Großen Stille zu fühlen.” From: Ibid.: 45.

³⁵ TBA. Original German: “Sie ist eine Verfassung des Gemütes — ein Zustand der Seele —, an dem sich der Lärm der Welt zu einer „Geräuschkulisse“ verwandelt, vor der die innere Stille sich erst vollends entwickelt und bewußt wird.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Vom doppelten Ursprung des Menschen: Verheissung — Erfahrung — Auftrag*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag, 2009: 43. Print.

³⁶ TBA. Original German: “Das Viele, das in uns und um uns tönt, muß still werden und schweigen, damit die Stimme aus dem Wesen gehört werden kann.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried. *Der Ruf nach dem Meister: Die Bedeutung geistiger Führung auf dem Weg zum Selbst*. Weilheim: O.W. Barth, 1972: 165. Print.

where something previously unseen can appear.

The path toward the dis-covery of man's essential being is "like stars in daylight, it is hidden from us by the light of our own objective consciousness, even though our purpose and destiny in life is to let it become manifest in and through ourselves."³⁷ One needs the elevation provided by a house of being or by the city, but once a sufficient elevation has been reached, man must release himself from the building work. Only then may the rest of the path appear, as "in the daylight of our world, we do not see the stars of the world above. Only for him who, in his quest for light, can bear to see his ordinary consciousness dim itself out, do the stars begin to shine."³⁸



³⁷ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen and Us*. Boston: Dutton, 1987: 110. Print; Original German: "wie am Tage die Sterne, im Licht unseres gegenständlich fixierenden Bewußtseins unseren Blicken entzieht." From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen und wir*. Frankfurt: FISCHER Digital, 2016: 113. Print.

³⁸ TBA. Original German: "Im Tageslicht unserer Welt sehen wir die Sterne der Überwelt nicht. Nur für den, der auf der Suche nach dem Licht eine Verdunkelung seines gewöhnlichen Bewußtseins in Kauf nimmt, beginnen die Sterne des LEBENS zu leuchten." From: Dürckheim, Karlfried. *Der Ruf nach dem Meister: Die Bedeutung geistiger Führung auf dem Weg zum Selbst*. Weilheim: O.W. Barth, 1972: 175. Print.

Fig. 27 *Starlight*. Calmly laying down on the top of the walls, man can find a place out of the reach of the light of the Τέχνη, which fills the city. Then, when his eyes are turned toward the skies, may he finally begin to see the light coming from the heavens, signs of the divine.

Silence is thus far more than a mere absence. It is a clearing where the divine call to man inviting him to come closer to his essential being can resound and shake him to his core. This event echoes with the rhymes of the Lithuanian poet:

<i>Ne, nenoriu sapnu,</i>	No, I do not want dreams,
<i>Vien tiesos ir darbu;</i>	Only truths and works;
<i>Be atilsio noriu kariauti</i>	Without rest I want to strive
<i>Ir tada vien tiktai,</i>	And only then,
<i>Kai sušvilpia žaibai,</i>	When the lightning bolts
<i>Galiu krūtine atsigausti.</i>	whistle,
	Can my chest find rest. ³⁹

Rest only comes after the strife, once man has sufficiently built the world that sheltered his being, and once he has rejected the dream of the clouds. An eastern wise man told that “silence roars like thunder.”⁴⁰ Indeed, but thunder always comes together with a lightning bolt, which comes from the heavens to pierce through the world and ends its course into the earth. It is the result of a tension between man, who stands on the wall of the house, and the Deity beyond the heavens. It descends from the skies, but it can also simultaneously start from the earth, and join the descending bolt in the ether. The lightning bolt marks the event where man is given sight of the rest of the path, when the spark of man’s essential being begins to shine within his chest.

In the meta-narrative, the event of illumination is nonetheless not one that can be pin-pointed. It represents the culmination of the building of man’s world, and its destin-ation. The purpose

³⁹ TBA. Maironis. “Pavasario balsai.” *Lietuvių klasikinės literatūros antologija*. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.

⁴⁰ TBA. Original Sino-Japanese: “一默如雷.” From: 岸澤惟安。《正法眼藏全講》。東京：大法輪閣，1974：78。

of language and of the world, as vehicle, is to bring man to this destin-ation, which is not where this vehicle ends its course, as this course has no end. The destin-ation of the vehicle is the same for all mankind: it is to bring men high enough for them to see the limits of language, and be ready to be struck by the lightning bolt of the silence of life. This destin-ation will not be reached by all men, and those who will reach it will do so at different times, when the vehicle is at different stat-ions. They can equally partake of the joy of bathing in the silence of life, and they are all offered an opportunity to continue their walk on the path toward the appropriation of their essential being. Some men will come to stand on the wall of silence when the vehicle is at its first stat-ion, that is, soon after they become dwellers of a house of being. Others will need more guidance from the Deity, and will need to see the vehicle go through other stat-ions in order to see its destin-ation. Some will need an encounter with the unintelligible (2nd stat-ion), an *ek-stasis* from presence (3rd stat-ion), a travel to a foreign house and a homecoming (4th station), or the building of bridges and clash between worlds (5th stat-ion). Despite this guidance, many will nonetheless never reach the destin-ation of the vehicle, and will forever remain on the way, in an endless and aimless circle, building the world but unable to see its purpose.

In both the narrative and the meta-narrative, the unfolding of the different stat-ions first occurs in the course of man's (hi)story, with each new stat-ion giving a greater guidance to future generations. Man thus appears to progressively receive greater favors from the Deity, as the vehicle gives him an increasingly clearer view of its own destin-ation, one that demands less and less efforts from man in order to be perceived. This increasing guidance would thus also give man fewer excuses to miss or ignore the aim of his world, and the aim of his building work within it. In parallel to this (hi)storical unfolding, another event also occurs, one that concerns each individual man. Indeed, in the course of his life, almost every man has personally experienced the travel of the vehicle to the different stat-ions that have been made accessible in the time he lives in. Job, for example, will begin his life on the naked earth, without language. Early in his infancy, he will be introduced inside a house of being, thereby experiencing the first stat-ion, and the first *ek-stasis*, although with a very limited knowledge and memory of it. Once he will have appropriated this

first house and made it his home, he will sooner or later encounter another, an unintelligible house, thereby experiencing the second station. As his life predates the advent of literacy and the revelation of the law, other stations may not be accessible to him, but he will nonetheless be carried by the vehicle to a limited number of stations, and be given the opportunity to bridge them. Future generations, such as the one of Moses or St Paul, will be carried further by the vehicle, but the lack of access to one or more stations does not prevent anyone from reaching his destination. The unconcealment brought on by the bridging of only two stations, whose opportunity is given to all men as they all experience the transition from earth to world, is meant to bring man on top of the wall of silence and make him wait for the lightning bolt that will pierce his heart and soul, thereby preparing him for the final part of his journey.

Thus, the discovery of the wall of silence is not a one-time event, nor one that begins at the end of times. It is unfolded at the end of the meta-narrative, but the course of the vehicle also mirrors the destiny of each individual man, across the entirety of his own (hi)story, and not only the destiny of mankind as a whole. The vehicle and every station together form an arrow pointing toward the silence of life. The vehicle is needed to reach it, as it implies a consciousness that is made possible and nurtured by the world, but once the destination has been reached, the vehicle has served its purpose and it can thus be put aside, at least for a moment. This particular vehicle is nonetheless more than a means of meta-physical transportation: it is the house of being, what allows man to be a creature that can be concerned with its own being. His dwelling is what gave man sight of the universe, and gave him a world to make sense of his experience of the earth. Standing on the wall of silence does not imply that man leaves the house or the city altogether. He cannot discard it as a ladder that would have helped him to climb and elevate himself to an upper level of consciousness, and that would now have become useless.⁴¹ Man is unable to simply leave the house of being, unable to forget his language and his world, as they are not mere tools at

⁴¹ Language therefore shares some aspects with what the Buddhist tradition names *upāya* (उपाय) in Sanskrit and *fāng biàn* (方便) in Chinese: a “skillful means,” something that paves the way toward truth, but which itself is not necessarily true.

his disposal. Man depends on the house as the house depends on him. To stand on its outer wall only implies that man endeavors to cease to actively take part in its building, and cease from letting the vision that it gives him of the universe completely shape him, and limit him. It is an attitude, a change of relationship with the house and the world, rather a departure. This nevertheless does not mean that man will forever remain a prisoner of the house and of the larger city. The vehicle's destination is the wall of silence, but it only marks the beginning of the last part of man's path toward his destiny, which can lead him beyond.



Fig. 28 *Destin-ation*. Laying on the city's rampart, his head turned toward the heavens, man's eyes begin to open themselves to the divine brilliance. Increasingly sensitive, as the brightness of the city's lamps grows dimmer and dimmer, his eyes are progressively filled with the fire from heaven, which then descends into his body, striking him as a lightning bolt and shattering his vision of the universe, the world that he thought

was indestructible. The rampart still stands, but man now begins to see that he is destined to undertake a final journey.

The lightning bolt that strikes the men waiting on the wall, no matter at which point in the (hi)story of the creation it occurs, marks the completion of man's world, on an individual level, but it is only the beginning of the way that will show him what lies beyond and lead him to his essential being.

7.2.3 The beyond

僧問洞山：寒暑到來如何回避？

山雲：何不向無寒暑處去？

僧雲：如何是無寒暑處？

山雲：寒時寒殺闍黎，熱時熱殺闍黎。

A monk asked Tung Shan, "When cold and heat come, how can we avoid them?" Shan said, "Why don't you go to the place where there is no cold or heat?" The monk said, "What is the place where there is no cold or heat?" Tung Shan said, "When it's cold, the cold kills you; when it's hot, the heat kills you."

— The Blue Cliff Record, 43th case⁴²

The silence of life, like the vehicle, is also a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. It marks man's readiness to receive the gift: being shown the rest of the path, the way toward his destiny. This gift is thus described by Dürckheim:

At the beginning of the way, there is the initiatic experience. It is in most cases an illuminating lightning bolt that transforms everything. As if a thick veil of mist was suddenly ripped apart, and a new center, a

⁴² Original Chinese from: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集(上)》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司，2005：478–479。；English translation from: *The Blue Cliff Record*. Shambhala Publications, 2005: 258. Print.

new core came to light. With it comes a new meaning, the promise of a new kind of plenitude, and of a different Whole. Mountains collapse, unknown abysses are opened, thin brooks become fertilizing rivers and the light that arises appears as the sun replacing the moon. Such experiences are the starry hours.⁴³

When man lives in the city, he is constantly bathed in its light. The city is like a clearing in the wood, to once again borrow Heidegger's metaphor, a clearing that reveals what is in its midst, but plunges further into darkness what lies beyond it. What the lightning bolt offers to the man standing on the wall of silence is a glimpse of what is concealed by the city's brightness. This raises a question: what lies beyond the walls of man's dwelling, of the city of being?

The counterpart to the city naturally is: the country. It is the place over which the Τέχνη does not hold sway, where the Φύσις shines in all its splendor. It is what is too vast to be comprehended, and what must be experienced rather than thought upon. Its essence is nonetheless far from the poetic images given to us by poets. It is not where the grass grows freely and untrampled, only moved by the wind and warmed by sun rays. It is not a place where raindrops are descending from the sky to water the naked earth and provide nourishment for the wonders of creation. It is not where the stars can be seen, far away from other sources of light. To begin to perceive the essence of the country, one must first observe the soil from where this word sprouted from, as the wisdom of the tradition once again holds the key to what is here sought. The technical ex-planation will give us a raw material, which will then be brought back to earth, through *poiesis*.

The word "country" comes from the French word *contrée*,⁴⁴ which primarily designates a region, an extent of land. The French

⁴³ TBA. Original German: "Am Anfang des Weges steht das initiatische Erlebnis, meist eine blitzartige, alles verwandelnde Erleuchtung. Es ist, als zerrisse ein großer Nebel, und schlagartig geht ein anderes Zentrum, eine neue Mitte auf, und mit ihr ein neuer Sinn, die Verheißung einer anderen Fülle, Ordnung und Ganzheit. Berge stürzen ein, unbekannte Abgründe tun sich auf, Rinnale verwandeln sich in befruchtende Ströme, und ein Licht geht auf, als löste die Sonne das Mondlicht ab. Solche Erlebnisse sind Sternstunden." From: Dürckheim, Karlfried. *Der Ruf nach dem Meister: Die Bedeutung geistiger Führung auf dem Weg zum Selbst*. Weilheim: O.W. Barth, 1972: 146. Print.

⁴⁴ See : "country." *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*. Web. 8 Oct. 2016.

word itself comes from the Latin *contrata*, “what is against,” “what is on the opposite side,” from which the English words “to counter,” “contrary” and “contrast” also find their source. Through this link, the essence of the country may now begin to be unveiled: the country is a **counter**part to the city, what is facing it, or more exactly, what the city stands in **contrast** to. Furthermore, the concept of **countr-y** may also be contrasted with another, coming from the house of Goethe and Hölderlin. The German word *die Gegend* presents a relatively similar link, as it designates a “region,” as an extent of land, but it is also associated with the concept of “being opposed” or “being against”: *gegen*. This parallel is worthy of being mentioned because the concept of *Gegend*⁴⁵ is debated extensively in the first dialog of Heidegger’s *Country path conversations*,⁴⁶ and many aspects of this concept are similar to the countr-y. The nature of the *Gegend*, as envisioned by Heidegger, will help us better see what the countr-y is, and thus the German word will be here translated as countr-y, rather than “region” and “open-region.”

According to the philosopher, the countr-y firstly is “itself what first grants all lodging.”⁴⁷ The city of being, and all the houses within its walls, are all indeed encompassed by the “free expanse”⁴⁸ of the countr-y. This implies that “we are not and are never outside the countr-y, insofar as we stay, after all, as thinking beings — and that means as transcendently representing beings — in the horizon of transcendence.”⁴⁹ The city is built within the free expanse of the countr-y, and yet, it also stands in contrast to it. The countr-y “surrounds us and shows itself to us as the horizon.”⁵⁰ The city is the realm of “things,” where the universe

⁴⁵ Heidegger, in the later part of the dialog, replaces the word *Gegend* by an ancient cognate: *Gegnet*. The English translation translates the first as “region,” and the second as “open-region.”

⁴⁶ Heidegger, Martin. *Country Path Conversations*. Indiana University Press, 2010: 1. Print; Original German: GA 77:i.

⁴⁷ Ibid.^t: 73; Original German: “was alle Unterkunft erst gewährt.” From: GA 77: 113.

⁴⁸ Ibid.^t: 73; Original German: “die freie Weite.” From: GA 77: 114.

⁴⁹ Ibid.^t: 78; Original German: “Der Weise: Das sind wir und sind es doch nicht. Wir sind nicht und nie außerhalb der Gegnet, insofern wir doch als denkende Wesen und d. h. als transzendental vorstellende uns im Horizont der Transzendenz aufhalten.” From: GA 77: 121.

⁵⁰ Ibid.^t: 78; Original German: “Als Horizont umgibt uns und zeigt sich uns die Gegnet.” From: GA 77: 121.

is quantized, schematized and ordained according to a man-made architecture. The countr-y is the realm of “no things,” of no-thing-ness, where re-presentations are absent, as explained by the three protagonists of the *country path conversation*:

Guide: The countr-y is the abiding expanse which, gathering all, opens itself so that in it the open is held and halted, letting each thing arise in its resting.

Scientist: This much I believe I see, that the open-region draws itself back, goes away from us [uns entgegen], rather than coming to encounter us [uns entgegenkommt].

Scholar: Such that things, which appear in the region, also no longer have the character of objects [Gegenständen].

Guide: Not only do they no longer stand counter to us, they no longer stand at all.⁵¹

The countr-y is itself what stands against the city, but where nothing stands against anything else. There are no “things” in the countr-y, and yet it is not empty. On the contrary, it is where all can be true to its nature, and “arise in its resting,” without being forcibly schematized and quantized. It goes away from us and conceals itself when we try to see it from the world, to objectify it and attempt to bring it into the city, where the blinding light and profusion of things make the countr-y fade away and disappear, as the place is antithetical to its nature. The essence of the countr-y is opposite to the essence of the city of being: it is no-thing-ness, where there is no subject nor object:

Scholar: We said that the countr-y lets each thing belong to each thing, in that it brings all to abide in the

⁵¹ Ibid.^t: 74; Original German: “Der Weise: Die Gegnet ist die verweilende Weite, die, alles versammelnd, sich öffnet, so daß in ihr das Offene gehalten und angehalten ist, Jegliches aufgehen zu lassen in seinem Beruhen. / Der Forscher: Soviel glaube ich zu sehen, daß die Gegnet sich eher zurückzieht, uns entgeht, als daß sie uns entgegen kommt. / Der GeLehrte: So daß auch die Dinge, die in der Gegend erscheinen, nicht mehr den Charakter von Gegenständen haben. / Der Weise: Sie stehen uns nicht nur nicht mehr entgegen, sondern sie stehen überhaupt nicht mehr.” From: GA 77: 114.

expanse of the abiding-while and lets everything rest in the return to itself.

Scientist: In this connection we pointed out that things within the countr-y lose the character of objects, or rather never acquired this character in the first place. This can only be due to the manner in which the countr-y enregions things, if I may here use the word that occurred to us earlier when we were concerned with naming the relationship of the countr-y to the human.⁵²

Outside of the city, of a house of being, all that can be seen as “things” within it appropriate each other, gathered as the “not-two,”⁵³ the “no-thing”:

Guide: The countr-y gathers — just as if nothing were happening [gleich als ob sich nichts ereigne] — each to each and everything to everything else, gathering all into an abiding while resting in itself. Countr-ying is a gathering re-sheltering into an expansive resting in the abiding-while.⁵⁴

⁵² Ibid.^t: 81 ; Original German: “Der Gelehrte: Wir sagten, die Gegnet lasse Jegliches zu Jeglichem gehören, indem sie alles in die Weite der Weile verweile und beruhen lasse in der Rückkehr zu sich selbst. / Der Forscher: Wir wiesen in diesem Zusammenhang darauf hin, daß die Dinge innerhalb der Gegnet den Charakter des Gegenstandes verlieren, ja gar nicht erst erlangen. Das kann nur an der Weise liegen, in der die Gegnet die Dinge ver gegnet, wenn ich hier das Wort gebrauchen darf, das uns vorhin einfiel, als es galt, das Verhältnis der Gegnet zum Menschen zu benennen.” From: GA 77: 125.

⁵³ This term of “not-two,” which originates from the Zen tradition, attempts to convey the idea that the very concept of all encompassing “one” irremediably leads the men using this word to conceptualize it in contrast with something else. When it is thought of as the “one,” it is objectified, and man places himself in a subject-object relation with it. When it is identified with a determinate sign-block within the house of being, the “one” is necessarily misrepresented. The greatest danger, however, is not this misrepresentation itself, but rather the fact that it might not be identified as a misrepresentation. It might even lead men to perceive this sign as an idol, causing them to stop their progression on the path toward their essential being. By using the term “not-two,” which can be paralleled with the so-called “negative theology,” men would be less prone to such a danger, as it does not claim to designate what is beyond the grasp of the logos, but rather only points out what it is different from.

⁵⁴ Ibid.^t: 74; Original German: “Der Weise: Die Gegend versammelt, gleich als ob sich nichts ereigne, Jegliches zu Jeglichem und Alles zu einander in das Verweilen beim Beruhen in sich selbst. Gegnen ist das versammelnde Zurückbergen zum weiten Beruhen in der Weile.” From: GA 77: 114.

The convoluted albeit precise language of the dialog attempts to fulfill an impossible, and yet necessary task, which is to represent the realm where “things” are not represented, to paint a picture of what cannot be depicted, but rather only experienced. This re-presentation is thus necessarily flawed. In particular, it may appear from the aforementioned description that the country is just the naked earth, the place where man lived before he was brought inside a house of being. The earth indeed came to be before the world, before the emergence of “things” as signs within a house of being, and it thus does not depend on the world. It forms a whole, continuously growing and changing, but nonetheless always constant in its unity and totality. The country is nonetheless more than this: “the country gathers,” not only the “things” of the world, but the world, the earth, the skies, man and the Deity itself. It gathers them, not within the city, but in the free expanse, where they are not represented, and are left, resting, so that they can appropriate one another, becoming an “abiding-while.” (*Weile*) Poetically, the city is a place where discontinuities are omnipresent, and meaning is everywhere. Signs in the streets constantly point to ideas, to man-made concepts. Letters and sounds unceasingly bring man to the realm of signifiers and signifieds. Wherever he looks, wherever he may be, he is surrounded by “things,” and he himself is a cog in the large machinery of the city.

In contrast with the city, the country is where man can escape the weight of the world, the pressure of the things that form the city-life, and where he can retreat in a simple, primitive shelter. It is where man can see the creation in its natural, physical form. Therein, the things of the world are not banished, but they do not hold sway. It is the place where harmony prevails, where everything finds its equilibrium, and especially man.

The country is where world, earth, skies, man, and the Deity can appropriate each other in their unity. The country is where the encounter of the contraries can occur, where the strife waged between them through man, in the world, can come to an end and where their harmony can become manifest. There only can this harmony *be* and be experienced, beyond oppositions and beyond distinctions, and there only may man be in harmony with his world, having finally stepped out of it. Where “language breaks...

no thing may be,”⁵⁵ and yet, it is in this **no-thing-ness** that every “thing” may truly *be*, according to its essential nature.

The countr-y, paradoxically, is the free expanse where *being* is impossible because it is where there is no world, and yet it is the place where it is necessary for man to go to truly be what he is meant to be. The city and the world allow man to be a human being, and yet, he will have to distance himself from both of them to accomplish his destiny. Man must cease to be a being *in* the world, and learn to be *with* the world, with the earth, with the skies, with his fellow men, and with the Deity. To be in harmony *with them* nevertheless does not imply a complete disappearance of the *ego*, that is, an identity with them. As said by Dürckheim: “the goal of the great experience in which the ego extinguishes itself is not the total dissolution of this ego, but rather its transformation.”⁵⁶ This great experience is the life in the countr-y, which is not the abandonment of the city, or of all dwelling. It only demands the dimming of world’s light so that the way to the countr-y that lies beyond may be perceived. The countr-y exists as countr-y and can be experienced as countr-y only when it stands as a counterpoint to the city, and yet the country nonetheless encompasses all, including the city itself. When man has come to realize this, when he has taken a glimpse of the nature of the countr-y and its link to his own being, he may then begin to walk the path of his own transformation, which forms a bridge between the city and the countr-y.

⁵⁵ Heidegger, Martin. *On the Way to Language*. New York: HarperCollins, 1982: 60. Print; Original German: “Kein ding sei wo das wort gebricht.” From: GA 12: 153.

⁵⁶ TBA. Original German: “Der Sinn der Großen Erfahrung, in der das Ich „eingeht“, ist nicht seine totale Auflösung, sondern seine Verwandlung.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Vom doppelten Ursprung des Menschen*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag, 2009: 120. Print.

7.2.4 The great journey, the great experience (*Er-fahrung*)

ܡܢ ܕܡܫܬܐ ܕܡܫܬܐ ܕܡܫܬܐ
ܡܢ ܕܡܫܬܐ ܕܡܫܬܐ ܕܡܫܬܐ

Who shall venture upon hidden
things, the boundaries whereof are
stillness and silence?

— S^t Ephrem, *Hymns on Faith*⁵⁷

The great journey, beyond the walls of the city, can be traveled by every man, at any point of his life, and at any stage of mankind's (hi)story. It nonetheless only becomes possible when man is mature enough. To him, the city is like a cocoon or a womb, favoring his growth and offering him protection from the elements. Man breaks its shell when he stands on the wall, has heard the silence of life, and seen the lightning bolt that illuminates the country, giving him sight of the way. This way is nonetheless not an ordinary path. It is not one that can be trodden solely by man's will, precisely because his will is entangled with his consciousness, which is opened and sustained by the city itself. His will is attached to his house of being, and he therefore cannot depend on it to venture outside of its walls.

The way beyond the wall demands a transformation of the very core of man's being. He must experience the limits of his world-*ego*, and voluntarily relinquish its power. He must release the world first, before he can discover what lies beyond. As said by Laozi: 爲學日益、爲道日損。損，之又損、以至於無爲，⁵⁸ "to pursue learning, learn more day by day; to pursue the Way, unlearn it day by day: Unlearn and then unlearn again until there is nothing to pursue."⁵⁹ In order to depart from the world, it must first be

⁵⁷ Translation from: Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847: 227. Print; Original Syriac from: Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones de Fide*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1961: 128. Print.

⁵⁸ 阿部吉雄。《新釈漢文大系〈7〉老子 莊子上卷》。東京：明治書院，1966：86。(道德經 48)。

⁵⁹ Laozi. *Dao De Jing: The Book of the Way*. Trans. Moss Roberts. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004: 128. Print.

un-learned, reversing the process by which man came to make the house of being his home, learning it piece by piece. This is not an easy task, and one that takes time, and demands patience. On the walls, in the silence of life, is where it can best be accomplished, by deconstructing the oppositions, by untying the bonds, and one by one, letting go of “things.” This is when the countr-y can be en-counterred. One does not *walk* to the countr-y, as it would be an act of will, thereby annihilating its essence. As the German master tells us: “according to the word, the **countr-y** [Gegend] would be that which comes to **encounter** [entgegenkommt] us.”⁶⁰ One thus cannot walk toward the countr-y: it is the countr-y that comes to us, or more exactly, the countr-y that pulls us when we have loosened the ties binding us to the city. As a wild, skittish creature, the countr-y retreats and hides when one tries to take hold of it. In the words of Yongjia Xuanjue (永嘉真覺):

覓即知君不可見	When you seek to know it, you cannot
取不得	see it.
捨不得	You cannot take hold of it,
不可得中只麼得	But you cannot lose it.
默時說	In not being able to get it, you get it.
說時默	When you are silent, it speaks;
大施門開無壅塞	When you speak, it is silent.
	The great gate is wide open . . .
	And no crowd is blocking the way. ⁶¹

Such is the nature of the countr-y. It comes to man when he is ready, when he has released his bonds with the city and stands, waiting. He must wait, but without awaiting, “for awaiting is already involved with representing and latches itself onto what is represented.”⁶² The countr-y itself “is perhaps not at all to

⁶⁰ Modified translation, and emphasis added. Heidegger, Martin. *Country Path Conversations*. Indiana University Press, 2010: 73. Print.

⁶¹ Watts, Alan W. *The Way of Zen*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011: 162. Print; Original Chinese from: 蔣九愚, 玄覺。《新譯永嘉大師證道歌》。台北: 三民書局股份有限公司, 2005: 6–7.

⁶² Heidegger, Martin. *Country Path Conversations*. Indiana University Press, 2010: 75. Print; Original German: “Warten, wohlan; aber niemals erwarten; denn das Erwarten hängt sich bereits in ein Vorstellen und an dessen

be represented, insofar as through representing everything already becomes an object [Gegenstand] standing-counter [entgegensteht] to us in a horizon.”⁶³ If it is to be spoken of, it can only be as a calling, as an invitation to open oneself to it, without trying to grasp, or to “under-stand” it. It can point to the gate, but cannot tell of what lies beyond, as it can only be experienced.

By himself, or following the call of another, man may see that the release of the world will mark the end of his worldly being, but not his end altogether. It is through this release that he will encounter his essential being. As Dürckheim tells us, this “letting oneself go requires, above all else, the inner conviction which enables us to feel, even if we relinquish our world-ego, that we will by no means fall into nothingness.”⁶⁴ Man will not fall into nothingness, into the abyss, but rather be carried and be embraced by **no-thing-ness**, which is its exact opposite, that is, the fullness of being, its completion, and a mutual appropriation with the not-two. On this journey, we need to perceive that “we will be upheld by a state of mind which frees us from relying solely on ourselves and our rational mind, and helps us to live from essential being and to participate in Divine Being. When a man has learnt to yield to his essential being, he has overcome dependence on and fear of the world.”⁶⁵ It is when he takes the risk of severing himself from the security of his home that man may live the great adventure, the experience of the countr-y. Distancing himself from his worldly being, from his worldly *ego*, he may discover his essential being.

Dürckheim described this essential being as “our experience of Divine Being as the Life which strives within us to manifest in

Vorgestelltes.” From: GA 77: 115.

⁶³ Ibid.: 75; Original German: “Es ist wohl überhaupt nicht vorzustellen, in sofern durch das Vorstellen Jegliches schon zum Gegenstand geworden ist, der in einem Horizont uns entgegensteht.” From: GA 77: 115.

⁶⁴ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971: 72. Print; Original German: “Sich lassen bedeutet daher vor allem ein Zulassen des Vertrauens darauf, daß man auch, wenn man sich in seinem Welt-Ich losläßt, keineswegs in ein Nichts fallen wird.” From Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Der Alltag als Übung: vom Weg zur Verwandlung*. Bern: Hans Huber, 1962: 88. Print.

⁶⁵ Ibid.^t: 72. Original German: “Man wird aufgefangen in einer Verfassung, in der man sich nicht mehr nur auf sich und sein Können verläßt und nicht mehr nur von der Welt her und auf sie hin da ist, sondern vom Wesen her, darin man teilhat am weltüberlegenen Sein. Wer gelernt hat, sich zum Wesen hin loszulassen, hat die Angst vor der Welt überwunden.” From *ibid.*^o: 88.

the . . .”⁶⁶ universe.⁶⁷ This experience, this venturing into the neighborhood of divine being, will reveal the very essence of man’s own being. It begins by the bridging of the different stat-ions and the discovery of the wall of silence, which unveils the fact that, “. . . a person looking for the truth is like a fish looking for water”⁶⁸ Man’s essential being, approached when one has taken distance from the world and the world-*ego*, uncovers a new layer of this truth. As told by D.T. Suzuki, when Dürckheim asked him if man was indeed a fish looking for water, the Japanese master agreed, but also added that he is “even more like water looking for water!”⁶⁹ The whole endeavor, from the building of the house of being to the severance from the city and the departure toward the countr-y, does not change anything to man’s essence. It does not make him an “overman,” nor does he “gain” anything from it that he didn’t already have. Entering the **neighborhood** of divine being only reveals what was veiled by man’s worldly *ego*, that is, the fact that this *ego* itself is an *ek-stasis* from divine being; that man’s essence is to be an **ek-static extension** of divine being.

Man is water searching for water, a manifestation of divine being searching for divine being. His nature thus is fundamentally paradoxical, as a creature whose worldly being depends on the *ego* opened by his house of being, but who is also called to his essential being, which is to reveal himself as a manifestation of divine being through the abandonment of his dwelling and of his worldly *ego*. Man’s deepest essence is thus to be an instrument, a tension between divine being and what is external to it. Man is not the subject nor the creator of this tension, but rather *is* the tension itself. He dwells in the realm of “things,” the world, but he is called to no-thing-ness. He originates from no-thing-ness, but

⁶⁶ Ibid.^t: 84. Original German: “Die Erfahrung des Seins als des LEBENS, das in uns zum Offenbarwerden in der Welt drängt, ist die Erfahrung des Wesens.” From *ibid.*^o: 104.

⁶⁷ Dürckheim here uses the word “world,” but not as the meta-physical “world,” and rather as what has been here called the “universe.” In order to avoid misunderstandings, the word has thus here been replaced, cutting the quote in an unusual manner for the sake of clarity.

⁶⁸ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen and Us*. Boston: Dutton, 1987: 48. Print; Original German: “. . . die Lage des Menschen, der sucht, der des Fisches, der das Wasser sucht. . .” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Zen und wir*. Frankfurt: FISCHER Digital, 2016: 51. Print.

⁶⁹ Ibid.^t: 48. Original German: “Doch eigentlich ist es noch anders. Es ist das Wasser, das das Wasser sucht!” From: *Ibid.*^o: 51.

this no-thing-ness only becomes manifest when man is taken from it and brought into the world, the house of being, the realm of “things.”

When the countr-y has revealed its own essence to man, he may then finally become conscious and embrace his destiny:

Man’s destiny is to bear witness, in his own special way, to Divine Being — which is to say, consciously and freely. Flowers and animals fulfil theirs of necessity and unconsciously — limited only by whatever external conditions may hinder them from becoming what, in their essence, they are. Man, however, unlike flowers and animals, has been endowed with consciousness; and it is by means of this quality that, as an “I”, he is able to stand and confront the world.⁷⁰

Man’s destiny therefore is not the dissolution of the world-*ego* into divine being, as this would contradict his own essence, which is to be a manifestation of divine being. Man is not called to a countr-y life, forever remaining in its serene tranquility and in communion with the Φύσις. The countr-y is where all is in a state of continuous harmony, the not-two where no “thing” can stand out and be manifested in its peculiarity, in its identity. When man dwells in the city, he nonetheless does not leave the not-two, does not leave the countr-y, as it englobes everything, including the city itself. What the city-life offers him thus is not a true departure from the not-two, but rather only its concealment. The clearing of the world induced by the city conceals the countr-y.

The emergence of man’s world-*ego* conceals divine being, whose proximity plunges man into a *lethe* of his own essential being. This concealment, however, is itself necessary, as it leads to a calling for man to unconceal his own nature. This calling first sends him away

⁷⁰ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971: 13–14. Print; Original German: “Die Bestimmung des Menschen ist: In seiner Weise zu zeugen vom göttlichen Sein. In *seiner* Weise, das heißt mit *Bewußtsein* und *frei*. Die Blumen und Tiere erfüllen ihre Bestimmung notwendig und ohne Bewußtsein. Nur äußere Umstände können sie hindern, zu werden, was sie ihrem Wesen nach sind. Der Mensch aber hat ein Bewußtsein, durch das er sich als ein *Ich* auf sich selbst und der Welt gegenüber stellt.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Der Alltag als Übung: vom Weg zur Verwandlung*. Bern: Hans Huber, 1962: 10. Print.

to the foreign and it then invites him to return home. Through this event, the distinction between the home and the foreign is blurred, as the two opposite poles are complementary, and both are necessary in order for man to *be* and to accomplish his destiny. Both the city and the countr-y are man's home, and both are also foreign to him. The realization of the nature of this duality is at the heart of the experience of man's essential being, but it must lead him further, to the perception that this duality itself is only a re-presentation of the not-two, which encompasses all, including the apparent duality between city and countr-y, and the one between man and divine being. Man never left the not-two. He never departed from the divine being. The journey of his life is one of unconcealment, of dis-covery, and of manifestation of divine being, rather than one of transformation and evolution. When man has awoken from the *lethe* of his own nature, that is, when he has seen that he is meant to be an instrument for the manifestation of divine being, he may then undertake the final destination of his life: meta-noia.

7.2.5 Man's destin-ation: meta-noia

穩密全真， 當頭取證； 涉流轉物， 直下承當。	Secure and intimate with the whole of reality, One obtains realization right there. In contact with the flow, able to turn things around, One assumes responsibility directly.
----------------------------------	---

— The Blue Cliff Record, 55th case⁷¹

In the narrative, death appears as a consequence of Adam and Eve's transgression. The venturing into the countr-y, on the other hand, can be seen as a death of the fallen man, one that announces his resurrection, which is induced by the great experience

⁷¹ Original Chinese from: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集(下)》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司，2005：588。；English translation from: *The Blue Cliff Record*. Shambhala Publications, 2005: 317. Print.

of man's essential being. Such an experience is thus described by Dürckheim:

The great experience — which leads to Metanoia, to a reversal of the old life and to new birth — contains two elements: the experience of oneness, in the stillness of which all things are rendered down, and the encounter with the special way in which we as individual beings participate in Being as Greater Life, which drives forward with dynamic force into the light of the world.⁷²

The silence of life leads man to distance himself from the house of being, and to venture toward the countr-y, which is the land of un-being, the land of death for the world-*ego*, which cannot survive when severed from its dwelling. The new birth comes when man realizes his nature as an instrument of divine being, and when he decides to embrace his destiny by becoming its conscious manifestation: “The divine seeks to realize himself in us, and we have nothing to do but to let it act.”⁷³ This occurs when man consciously *becomes the tension* between divine being and the world-*ego*, when harmony is found between the two, letting both appropriate each other, both be distinct and yet resonate in unison. Two elements are dancing together, so intertwined one with the other that they become hardly distinguishable, and yet they maintain their individuality: the world-*ego* and divine being, the city and the countr-y, man and the Deity.

Narrative and meta-narrative both come together at the end of the (hi)story of language and being, as man's final destin-ation. They come in contact through **metanoia** (μετάνοια), a Greek word that resounds across the whole narrative and represents its culmination. The last book of the Scriptures warns man: μνημόνευε οὖν πῶς ἐλλήφας καὶ ἤκουσας καὶ τήρει καὶ μετανόησον, “Remember then what you received and heard; keep that, and **repent**

⁷² Ibid.^t: 83–84. Original German: “In der «Großen Erfahrung», in der es wirklich zur Metanoia, zu einer Umkehr und Neugeburt kommt, sind immer zwei Momente enthalten: die Erfahrung des *All-Einen*, als des alles in seiner Stille aufhebenden «Einen Seins» und die Erfahrung der besonderen Weise, in der man als *individuelles Wesen* am Sein als dem Großen *Leben* teilhat und mit dynamischer Wucht ans «Licht der Welt» drängt.” From: Ibid.^o: 103–104.

⁷³ Goettmann, Alphonse. *Dialogue on the Path of Initiation: An Introduction to the Life and Thought of Karlfried Graf Dürckheim*. New York: Globe Pr Books, 1991: 43. Print.

[metanóēson]” (Rev 3:3). Man should not abandon his inheritance and the gift of the Sanctuary. The journey is not meant to transform man into a being living outside the world, in the country, and neither is he meant to remain a mere city-dweller. His essential being is: “the means by which Divine Being strives through us to manifest itself in the world — not as something apart from the world, a mere spiritual inwardness, but as a bodily presence.”⁷⁴ Man is destined to become a manifestation of divine being in all the elements that are part of his life: in the world, on the earth, under the skies.

Man is ordered to “keep that,” to preserve the world and the earth, but also to “repent,” that is, to perform a *metanoia*. Repentance is nonetheless only the most superficial meaning of this word. It originally implies a conversion, a change of thought or mind (νοῦς), and in this particular context, the rejection of sin. In the narrative, man’s *metanoia* may indeed be seen as a repentance for his sins, and in particular for the “original sin,” the transgression of Adam and Eve that caused the fall of mankind as a whole. In the meta-narrative, on the other hand, man’s *metanoia* is, as told in the words of Dürckheim, the result of the great experience of the appropriation of his essential being. Its most superficial meaning is that of a conversion, a change of mind, by which man accepts what had always been his nature: to be a manifestation of divine being. On a deeper level, this *metanoia* may also be seen as conflated with the one of the narrative.

In the midst of the house(s) of being, sins are violations of the Sanctuary, a disrespect for the separation it projects on the world, a world which is thereby cleaved between what is good and what is evil. Such a separation is necessary because man is endowed with the power of the will, arising from the world-*ego* that finds its source in the clearing of the world that occurs as the result of the building of the house itself. The possibility of sin only comes when one has the power to choose between obedience and transgression.

⁷⁴ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971: 13. Print; Original German: “Das Wesen eines jeden von uns ist die Weise, in der er teil hat am göttlichen Sein, die Weise also, wie dies Sein in ihm darauf drängt, offenbar zu werden in der Welt. In der Welt — also nicht abseits in weitabgewandter, nur geistiger Innerlichkeit, sondern im leibhaftigen Da-Sein.” From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Der Alltag als Übung: vom Weg zur Verwandlung*. Bern: Hans Huber, 1962: 10. Print.

It implies a consciousness that only emerges within the house of being, and this is why only man can be judged among the earthly creatures, as he only is a dweller. The essence of sin nonetheless remains concealed as long as man cannot see beyond the horizon of his world, that is, see beyond the walls of the city. Only when man's destiny is clearly seen can he take the final step toward redemption.

The essence of Adam and Eve's transgression can then also be seen in this light. Indeed, once man has peered beyond the walls, the "original sin" can then appear as more than a violation of the Sanctuary's guidance, more than the transgression of a taboo. The eating of the fruit then appears as what it truly is: only a sign of something else, the skin of the real fruit that was eaten in the garden. What was lost in Eden was man's destiny itself, what he was meant to be. It represented the misuse of man's innermost nature, as a being endowed with language and will, and it also represented a corruption of his essence, as a manifestation of divine being. Man's essence is to be an ek-static manifestation of divine being. His world-*ego* emerges as the seat of a tension between himself and his source: the not-two. Man is the not-two, water searching for water, and yet his world-*ego* induces a separation and a tension with it. This world-*ego* exists as a means for divine being to manifest itself through man, and it is man's destiny to fulfill this role, keeping his world-*ego* and the not-two in tension. When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the narrative, the first men rejected their destiny. They released the tension between world-*ego* and divine being, considering themselves not only as independent from it, but also as equal with it. Man thereby denied his own nature, and refused his role of instrument for the manifestation of divine being, so as to instead become a living manifestation of a disharmony between him and the not-two. The entire (hi)story of man can then be seen as an attempt to recover from this event, through a conversion, a metanoia.

The way toward metanoia begins in the earthly narrative, which presents it as a "repentance." When man is still a prisoner of his house of being, and of the larger city, his metanoia represents a change of behavior in the world and on the earth. He will respect the inviolability of the sacred space delimited by the Law. He will pursue what is good and flee from what is evil. Doing this, he will edify the city. He will make it ascend toward the skies, ultimately

enlarging his horizon enough for him to realize that something lies beyond the walls of the city. Repentance is thus only the first step in man's metanoia. It is what leads him toward the silence of life, but it does not represent a recovery of what was lost with man's fall.

It is only once man has been approached by the countr-y, and once he has ventured in the neighborhood of his essential being, that he can experience the true metanoia. Indeed, how could he repay a transgression whose nature was until now concealed to him? Before dis-covering the nature of his essential being, man only saw the original sin as the eating of the forbidden fruit, as a transgression of the law. He was oblivious to its deeper roots and implications: the fact that it foremost was a severance of the world-*ego* from divine being, and a rejection of man's role in the creation, which is to be its manifestation. Only when he has seen the true nature of this sin, its full extent, can he truly atone for it.

The way to the final metanoia nevertheless begins before man's closeness with his essential being, as the two are intertwined. The source of the original sin, and the source of sin altogether, is a lack of restraint of man's world-*ego*. The final metanoia thus demands that man put a bridle on this untamed beast; demands that he let go of the illusion that he is master over himself, and that he is a subject thrown into a universe of objects: the earth, other men, and the Deity itself. This, however, is also precisely what is demanded of man before he can be approached by the countr-y and unveil the nature of his essential being. To stand on the wall of silence and to release the grip of the world is the beginning of the way toward a metanoia, in its full sense. Thus, when man experiences the nearness to his essential being, between city and countr-y, he is already on the way, and he only needs to let himself be carried by the inertia. He only needs to realize that: "The divine seeks to realize himself in us, and we have nothing to do but to let it act. The gardener's work is a good example: he cannot pull on the plant in order to make it grow faster, but he must ready the conditions so that this movement, this dynamism of life will not be blocked."⁷⁵ The completion of the final metanoia occurs when man decides to cease to resist his own nature and when he

⁷⁵ Goettmann, Alphonse. *Dialogue on the Path of Initiation: An Introduction to the Life and Thought of Karlfried Graf Dürckheim*. New York: Globe Pr Books, 1991: 43. Print.

agrees to take his place within the creation, as the instrument of a tension between the city and the countr-y, between the creation and the creator, between the not-two and its manifestation. Doing this, man ceases to be a dweller of the city, and he becomes the path between the city and the countr-y. He does not abandon his former dwelling. He rather only ceases to be its prisoner, to rely on it to *be*, as he sees that his essential being lies in the tension he has now become. The metanoia, as repentance and then as conversion, can now clear the way for a new kind of being, a new kind of thinking: meta-noia.

Once the rind of the nature of metanoia has been peeled off, its two halves can now be separated to reveal its core: **metanoia is meta-noia**. The second half designates the use of the *nous* (νοῦς), the activity of the mind, that is, thinking. The first, on the other hand, is a versatile prefix, meaning either “beyond,” “after,” or the concept of “meta” as designating a higher level of abstraction. Metanoia can thus be seen as meta-noia, as thinking *beyond* thinking, being *after* thinking, and *meta*-thinking, with all three meanings reflecting different of its aspects. It is man’s existence when he is free from the weight of the world, free to distance himself from the city, without nonetheless forgetting himself in the countr-y. It is the taming of the world-*ego*, made subservient to man’s destiny as a manifestation of divine being.

In meta-noia, man is also free from temptation and sin, as the latter arises from an unbridled world-*ego*. Living according to his essential being rather than his purely worldly being, man repairs the bond that was broken with the fall, and he finds his place back in the creation. This nevertheless does not imply a cancellation of the effects of the fall. Man will remain mortal, and he may still fall again, leaving the meta-noia and returning to a secluded life within the walls of the city, prisoner of his own world-*ego*. Even if man stays in his rightful place, his journey nonetheless was not a mere return to Eden. At the beginning of his life in the garden, Adam was not in *metanoia*, as he had yet to sin; he had yet to sever his link with his essential being. He may nonetheless have been in *meta-noia*, thinking and being without being prisoner of the house of being that he was building.

The long journey of mankind is one that conflates the meanings of both metanoia and meta-noia. Only the fallen man can

experience the joy of metanoia, which gives him an armor against temptation together with a deeper consciousness of the nature of his own being. Only one who has been prisoner may know the true taste of freedom, and only one who has been unnerved by the noise of the city may truly appreciate the calm and silence of the countr-y. The tension at the heart of man's essential being is not only restored following man's metanoia. It is also increased and strengthened, as his world has been considerably extended, and its foundations deepened, thereby reinforcing the counterweight to divine being. The weight of the world surged with the building of the city, enhancing its contrast with the countr-y and therefore the tension necessary to find a harmony between them. Man, as the string establishing this tension, has spiritually grown larger and stronger, deepening the sound it will produce when it is plucked. Each man, each string is also part of a larger instrument whose construction has yet to be completed, and only once the instrument has taken its final form may it be played by its maker, and the sound of being be heard. Only once every man has been given a chance to fulfill his destiny may the (hi)story of man end.

7.2.6 The two cities, the two trees

以無師智，發無作妙用。
以無緣慈，作不請勝友。
向一句下，有殺有活。
於一機中，有縱有擒。
且道什麼人曾恁麼來？

By means of the knowledge that
has no teacher, he produces the
marvelous function of non-doing;
By means of unconditional
compassion, he acts unasked as
an excellent friend. In one
phrase there is killing, there is
giving life; In one act there is
releasing, there is holding. Tell
me, who has ever been like this?

— The Blue Cliff Record, 62nd case⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Original Chinese from: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集（下）》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司，2005：649。； English translation from: *The Blue Cliff Record*. Shambhala Publications, 2005: 352. Print.

The possibility of meta(-)noia is offered to every man, from Adam until the last man born on the earth. All can equally partake of man's destiny. However, not everyone will succeed or even try to fulfill their role in it. No matter whether they succeed or fail in their endeavor, almost all the men of the narrative's universe will nevertheless know the deep sleep of death,⁷⁷ and they will wait for the end of days and the passing of the earth. At the dusk of (hi)story, all are brought to face judgment and mankind is separated in two: those who are deemed worthy of dwelling in the new city, the New Jerusalem that descends from the skies onto a new earth, and those who will stay at its doors, in the lake of fire, deprived of its light and unable to approach the tree of life that stands in its midst.

The New Jerusalem is an earthly city, whose gates are forever opened, but one that will not shelter mankind as a whole: "nothing unclean shall enter it, nor any one who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life"⁷⁸ (Rev 21:27). It is a place of harmony between the different elements of the creation. It is a city, product of the Τέχνη, but one with a physical core, the tree of life, which sustains all the dwellers of the city by its fruits. The passing of the old earth nonetheless does not imply a disappearance of the world, of the city, the world-tree, the organically growing meta-φύσις. The transition of a portion of mankind into the new earthly city, the New Jerusalem, nonetheless marks the advent of a profound transformation of man's world. The narrative indeed tells us that the last judgment will separate those deemed worthy of entering the Holy City from those condemned to stay at its doors. This separation between those who have accomplished their destiny and the sinners who have rejected or neglected it also tells us something concerning the world: it implies that no new meta(-)noia will occur, as well as no new sin.

The game has already been played, and now, all the pawns are

⁷⁷ The only exception would seem to be the last virtuous men on earth, who would directly dwell in the new city, without experiencing death. The cases of the prophet Elijah and of Enoch, however, could be considered as other exceptions as well, as the narrative tells us that they were taken by the Deity, without experiencing death (See Heb 11:5 concerning Enoch, and 2 Ki 2:1–11 concerning Elijah).

⁷⁸ "καὶ οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτὴν πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ [ὁ] ποιῶν βδέλυγμα καὶ ψεῦδος εἰ μὴ οἱ γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου." (Rev 21:27).

standing still, unmoved and unable to move others. This means that the city of being is still standing, but that all construction in its midst will now cease. Man cannot dwell in it as he had before without the possibility of sinning, or the opportunity to stand on the wall of silence and begin a meta(-)noia. At this point, the city has already served one of its main purposes, which was to guide a part of mankind toward its destiny, as an instrument of a tension between city and countr-y, through which divine being manifests itself in man. No new building is required, but the city nonetheless remains, as the necessary counterpoint to the countr-y, the second pole through which the tension and therefore the manifestation is made possible. The survival of the city of being is confirmed by the narrative, in the description of the life of the inhabitants of the earthly city: “the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads”⁷⁹ (Rev 22:3–4). The city of being remains, but it is not unaffected by the events of the end of days. Language remains only as writing, as names inscribed on the flesh of man or carved on the walls of the New Jerusalem. Life in the new city does not require nor allow speech, which would imply a continuation of the building of the world and the possibility to fall from meta(-)noia. Furthermore, as meta-noia implies that man becomes a tension between worldly city and countr-y, he is now dwelling in silence, on the border wall of the city rather than in its midst. The city of being thus only stands because of the perduring of the written word, that is, because of its parts that do not need continuous support in order to prevent their collapse and their fall into oblivion.

The passing of the old earth thus induces a violent tremor that shakes the city of being to its foundations. Most of its structure will collapse, as men stand on the outer walls and are not concerned with its support. What could remain are the parts that are preserved in writing, etched on the earth, in the form of paper, clay, wax, or leather. The old earth, upon which a large part of the city of being rested, has now disappeared, replaced by a new earth which is almost devoid of any writing. Therefore, all that now remains of the world is what is remembered by the dwellers, and a

⁷⁹ “καὶ ὁ θρόνος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσται, καὶ οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ καὶ ὄψονται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.” (Rev 22:3–4).

few scattered blocks that stand on the earth, without human support. These blocks are mentioned by the narrative: names etched on the new earth, on the walls of the city, and on the skin of man. The cemented parts of the worldly city are reduced to their core, that is, the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, inscribed on the doors of the earthly city, and the name of the Deity, written on the forehead of each one of its dwellers. This last name becomes the center of the world, an *omphalos* within the city of being. This choice is all too natural, as the city is meant to constitute a pole allowing the manifestation of divine being. What other sign-block would better re-present divine being than the name of the Deity? One block is sufficient to maintain the tension between city and countr-y, between Τέχνη and Φύσις, and between world-*ego* and essential being. Inscribed on man's forehead, the seat of his mind (as νοῦς) and the source of his meta(-)noia, it represents the fact that man himself *is* the living manifestation of divine being, on the earth (in the New Jerusalem), and in the world (in the city of being). The name designates what is in front of him, standing on the throne on the earth, but it is also his own name, as he is a part of the ocean of divine being.

In the course of his (hi)story, man was water searching for water, but he has now dis-covered himself. He is the link, the moving surface of the waters that makes it visible as a whole, through contrast with another space, the air. Man dwells in the world, as the clearing of a space distinct from divine being. He is the surface of the ocean, in contact with the air, but this contact nevertheless does not change the water's nature, and it does not separate it from the whole formed by the ocean. The men who forgot themselves in the world evaporated themselves in the air, ceasing to contribute to the ocean's manifestation without nonetheless changing their nature as water. During man's life on earth, all water was irremediably pulled back toward the ocean, but the heat of the fire of hell now prevents the return of the departed water, its condensation.



Fig. 29 *Surface tension*. Waves ripple on the surface of the water, rising and falling, expanding and vanishing. The ocean can be seen as a reunion of countless of such waves, which are born, live and die under the skies, washing the earth as they hit the shores. Their nature nonetheless never changes: they are water, part of the same great ocean that stands in contrast to the dry land and the ether. The waves are the manifestation of the underlying forces that move the water: they are what can be seen of the ocean from the earth and the skies, and it is by going through them that one can enter the deepest waters.

The Deity can be seen because man stands in front of it, and yet, the name on his forehead reminds us that man is more than a mere creature “belonging” to its creator: man belongs to divine being, not as a possession between subject and object, but rather as an inseparable part of it, as its surface, which stands in tension between it and the air that lies beyond.

The city only needs one block in order for the world to be preserved, and for the ek-static tension between man’s world-*ego* and divine being to perdure, but at the end of man’s (hi)story, larger parts of the city sustained by the memory of its dwellers would logically remain. Indeed, in order for the tension to be maintained, man must still possess the ability to dwell in his house(s) of being. The narrative also mentions the perpetuation of a diversity of peoples.⁸⁰ At the end of time, the world-tree has thus survived the great tremor that shook the city to its foundations. Its growth has been stalled. It has lost some of its branches and leaves, but

⁸⁰ Rev 17:15, among other verses.

it has withstood the trial of time, and it is now as frozen for all eternity, with man at its side.

For the men who succeeded in the accomplishment of their destiny, their new, eternal life will be spent in the two cities, in the center of which are two trees. The earthly city is one of architectural and material perfection, made of the most precious and rarest elements found on earth. It is also the seat of the tree of life, which will eternally sustain those who dwell around it, bathed in the warm light of divine being. In contrast with it, man will also continue to dwell in the worldly city which, on the other hand, now lays in ruins, a shadow of its former glory, only standing as a monument to man's work. The world-tree in its midst is now dry. Its leaves have withered and were blown away by the cold wind of the dusk of time. Its branches nevertheless still remain, as a testimony to the efforts and time spent to build the instrument enabling the manifestation of divine being.

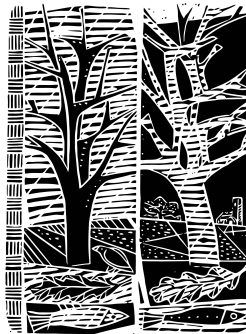


Fig. 30 *The two trees*. The tree of the Τέχνη flourished when man had to toil the earth. It was his refuge from the wrath of the skies and the hardships of the earth, a refuge that allowed him to contemplate the Φύσις. Now, however, the autumn of the world has taken its leaves, and the winter made it barren, leaving it to be a mere skeleton of its former glory. Standing in contrast with the world that was desolated by the works of the skies, the new earth goes through its spring, with the tree of life offering fruits for the sustenance of man's body. As a dweller of both world and earth, man can now appropriate the space between opposites: between

the world-tree and the tree of life, life and death, winter and summer, language and silence, city and country, *ego* and divine being.

The contrast between the two cities and the two trees reflects the harmonious tension established by man's mediation. In each of the two realms, the earth and the world, a harmony between Φύσις and Τέχνη now prevails, in two different manners. A fruitful tree sustains the inhabitants of the earthly city, and a barren tree stands among the ruins of the worldly one. In both places, the phusical is interlaced with the technical, and because of this, the two realms are also harmoniously intertwined, as the technical is a product of the world, and the phusical a fruit of the earth. The organic growth of the world-tree was tied to the Φύσις of the earth, and reciprocally, the building of earthly structures was the product of the world. Through man's mediation, the harmony of the two realms can be manifested. Man, however, is also a tension: one between the city of being and the countr-y, which encompasses all.

The earthly city is located within this countr-y, facing the worldly one. Man is a tension between them, but this does not imply that he now dwells in a form of dualism, between two opposite equal elements. Indeed, all belong the countr-y, the not-two from which man, his world, and his world-*ego* emerged. This nonetheless does not mean that man dwells in a form of monism either, as his world and his *ego* are precisely what stands out from the not-two, and what allows its manifestation. Man's ultimate destiny is to dwell in the space between duality and unity, between the two and the not-two. He is the surface of the ocean of being, neither outside nor inside it. He is the tension that makes the ocean and its surface appears. This appropriation of the space between the not-two and the two is nonetheless without limits, as it can itself become the source of a separation, of a new dualism. Indeed, if man is a tension between the two and the not-two, between the city and the countr-y, this opens up the possibility of a contrast between:

- dwelling in between (between the two and the not-two) and the two
- dwelling in between (between the two and the not-

two) and the not-two

— dwelling in between (between the two and the not-two) and the two) and ...

...

Man is therefore destined to dwell in indeterminacy, which reflects his paradoxical nature, as what divine being is, and what stands in front of divine being, like the men with the name of the Deity standing face to face with it in the new earthly city.

Man will nonetheless not simply be this tension between city and countr-y. He will remain a dweller of the earth, in the new Holy City. He will still have a body made of flesh, but one sustained by the water of life and the fruits of the tree. He will continue to live, in silence, but not in idleness. Man's task following the last judgment would seem to be the work that is advised to the men who performed a metanoia during their lifetime: "remember then from what you have fallen, repent [μετανόησον] and do the works you did at first"⁸¹ (Rev 2:6). These works would seem to be those of Adam and Eve in the garden from which they fell, which was to "till it and keep it."⁸² Man will thus take care of his new dwelling, and preserve it. He will do so not only on the earth, but in the world as well, and he will keep both the earthly and the worldly city, the tree of life and the world-tree. The original Hebrew words describing these tasks also tell us something more than their trans-lation: לַעֲבֹדָהּ וּלְשַׁמְרָהּ [lə'ābədāh ūləšāmərāh]. The first triliteral root word, עֲבָד (ayin-beth-daleth), combines the meaning of "work" and "worship," and the second, שָׁמַר (shin-mem-resh), the meanings of "keeping," "watching over," and "respecting (a commandment)." This is significant because this is precisely the main action that is performed by the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem: "the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him"⁸³ (Rev 22:3). This act of worship, this "latría" (λατρεία [latreia]), is the only action that St

⁸¹ "μνημόνευε οὖν πόθεν πέτωκας καὶ μετανόησον καὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἔργα ποίησον" (Rev 2:6).

⁸² Gen 2:15.

⁸³ "καὶ ὁ θρόνος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσται, καὶ οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ" (Rev 22:3).

John describes in his vision of the new city. It can designate earthly forms of worship, such as bows and prostrations, but also worldly worship as well, as a communion of the world-*ego* with the divine being. Such a silent worship is the apex of man's existence, the moment where the string in tension between his earthly body and his worldly *ego* is plucked, and the sound of its being can resonate in unison with all the other strings. This single sound is something that possesses no location, no source, and no destination. It enfolds all that it can reach, before slowly fading away, and yet it never is totally extinguished, like the ocean's waves.

An attempt to describe the silent worship in the new city will nevertheless necessarily contradict its essence. In order to clearly see the nature of man's ultimate stand, one may nonetheless observe similar attitudes, both inside the narrative and in other traditions. When Jesus was confronted by men wanting to stone the adulterous woman, he at first simply bent down and drew a line in the sand, delineating an artificial separation between what was good on one side, and what was evil on the other.⁸⁴ The men around him did not perceive this, and they continued to question him. Jesus then resorted to explain them, using language, even though they only needed to look at him to see their own misjudgment be pointed out, and see that the separation of the two poles symbolized by the line in the sand is only an illusion, as both are intertwined. Other examples, perhaps even more directly related to man's stand in the New Jerusalem, can be found in the Eastern tradition.

In a dialogue with some of his disciples, the Indian Buddhist monk Bodhidharma, founder of the Zen tradition, asked whether they could say something to demonstrate their understanding. Three of the disciples answered, using language, and received signs of approval from the master. The fourth simply bowed deeply and silently before standing up. Bodhidharma then decided to give the silent disciple his robe and bowl, symbols of the transmission of his teaching. This can be paralleled with the stand taken by another follower of Zen and a direct successor of the Indian master. The Chinese monk Juzhi (俱胝), distressed after realizing he was unable to reply when interrogated concerning the nature of Zen teachings, visited master Tianlong (天龍) in hope of an answer.

⁸⁴ John 8:1-11.

The master replied by raising a single finger. According to tradition, Juzhi was enlightened as a result of this experience, and his sole teaching then was to raise one of his fingers.⁸⁵

When man silently worships the Deity in the New Jerusalem, he is taking a stand, between earth and world, physical action and meta-physical language. He does not need either because he himself is a manifestation of divine being. He himself, by his stand and his openness to the flow of being, is the incarnation of the tension between the city and the countr-y, the world-*ego* and divine being. As said by D.T. Suzuki, man is water searching for water. He is a “thing” that protrudes from the body of the ocean, a wave that is one with the rest of the waters and yet can be distinguished from it. The silent gesture, the bowing down by the man who has reached his destin-ation, submitting his self before the divine throne, is the curling of a wave, which bows down toward the ocean. It is at the moment when the curling is at its peak, and the wave is as distant from the body of the water as it will ever be, that comes the time for it to disappear and for it to once again be united with what always carried and engulfed it.



Fig. 31 The wave.

The water ceases to search for water, but new waves will soon rise, so that the ocean will continue to face itself, contemplating its own re-flection, searching for its own image.

⁸⁵ 山本玄峰。無門関提唱。東京：大法輪閣，1994：33–43. (Mumonkan, case 3).

Conclusion

靈鋒寶劍，常露現前，
亦能殺人亦能活人，
在彼在此，同得同失。
若要提持，一任提持；
若要平展，一任平展。
且道不落賓主，
不拘回互時如何？

The subtle point, the jewel sword,
perpetually revealed, present in
front of us. It can kill people and it
can bring people life. It's there and
it's here, gaining and losing
together with us. If you want to
pick it up, you're free to pick it up;
if you want to put it down, you're
free to put it down. But say, what's
it like when not falling into guest
and host, when interchanging
without getting stuck?

— The Blue Cliff Record, 75th case⁸⁶

The biblical tradition is one of the loudest and most pervasive voice from our past, a vision of what lies beyond man's experience of the numinous. It not only offers man a perspective on what drove the life of his forefathers, but also an ideation of what mankind is, as a whole, beyond the presence of his experience of the earth. When seen under this light, the question that has been the focus of modern scholarship concerning the Bible loses its luster. To attempt to prove or disprove the events of the narrative, to defend it as divinely revealed truth or attack it as myth is to

⁸⁶ Original Chinese from: 吳平。《新譯碧巖集（下）》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司，2005：795。（80th case, in this edition）；English translation from: *The Blue Cliff Record*. Shambhala Publications, 2005: 412. Print.

miss what is the most precious concerning the biblical tradition, that is, the fact that it represents a raw matter, given to us as inheritance and meant to become the source of a reflection on our personal experience of the numinous, and the key unlocking the revelation of its nature.

Like the men of the narrative, we ourselves are also thrown on the earth, under the skies. We live in a house of being, part of a larger city, and our experience of our environment is limited by our personal horizon. History, archeology, anthropology and the other disciplines of the Τέχνη will never teach man his destiny, and no matter how precisely will they determine the “how,” the “why” will forever remain out of their reach. What the narrative offers him is a vision of the whole, a way for him to project himself and transcend the limits of his earthly and worldly horizons. The range of man’s experience is indeed limited, on the earth, to what is physically and temporally present in front of him. The worldly techniques and sciences nonetheless give him the possibility to transcend this presence to a certain extent. He is indeed able to relate worldly accounts of the experiences of others to his own experiences, thereby enlarging his worldly horizon. This expansion will nevertheless always be limited to the past, and it will always fail to answer the question of the purpose of man’s life, his destiny. Only through two different means could he fully transcend his horizon: the first is a divine revelation, and the second is imag-ination. The narrative could be the product of either, or even both, and its value would not change significantly. By giving us a vision of man’s (hi)story as a whole, it offers us an opportunity to confront the vision of his destiny with our own experience, our own world, and our life on the earth.

The raw material of the narrative has here been the source of the telling of a meta-narrative: a (hi)story of language and being. This (hi)story represents an encounter between different traditions, different worlds, different times. It is a window to our universe and a mirror in which we can see ourselves, following the narrative’s strange-loop structure. According to this structure, the first *ek-stasis*, the one that cleared the way toward the meta-narrative, can also be seen as the last one, located between the *ek-stasis* following the Pentecost and the end of times. The present (hi)story can thus be seen as looped around itself, as it can begin only when it is close to its end. Indeed, it is only when the house of being appears as

such within the house itself that the meta-narrative can begin, and such an appearance can only occur once the clash of worlds has begun, after the village of being has become a city. The meta-narrative itself thus mirrors the strange-loop of the relationship between the Bible and its universe, and the strange-loop of the relationship between the house of being and its representations within itself.

This meta-narrative does not only give us a vision of what our destiny could be. It may also clear a path for an experience of the house of being, as a preparation for the appropriation of man's essential being. When adequately understood, as the bringing to the twilight of world and earth of the encounter between the scholarly tradition concerning the nature of language and the biblical tradition, the (hi)story of the house of being may then itself be perceived as something more than a metaphysical ideation: something that can be experienced as earthly as well as worldly, and as something that approaches the horizon of man's readiness-to-hand. It may trigger an experience of language itself, as house of being, as *langage* rather than *langue* or speech. Such an experience would significantly differ from the experience of the particular languages that everyone "uses" in their daily life. All indeed "use" languages as tools constantly throughout their lives. Some will come to reflect on the nature of the particular language(s) they speak, or languages foreign to them: they are the philologists. A small portion of mankind will take interest in language in general: they are the linguists and the philosophers of language. Very few, however, will attempt to go beyond the technical study of language, and instead try to bring language itself, as *langage*, into the horizon of their experience, so as to see and experience the role it plays in man's essential being. Such an experience requires an ability to fathom the technical constructions of the linguists and the philosophers, but it perhaps also, more importantly, necessitates a certain openness to the poetic, an openness that is more easily found and yet seldom seen, as the poetic is one of the two forces governing the twilight of world and earth, which is the doorway toward man's appropriation of his essential being, the other being *meta-phor*.

The poetical work of Heidegger, which constitutes one of the major sources of inspiration for the present work, has more often than not been dissected by scholars who are prisoners of the Τέχνη.

The most technical, least poetical of his works is largely considered his *magnum opus*, thereby showing a failure to see the need for a return to the poetic, without which the technical only becomes the source of an increasingly powerful delusion that holds sway not only of the philosophers, but also progressively of mankind as a whole, through their influence. The difficulty that explains why poetic works are often not seen for what they really are resides in the fact that contrary to the products of the Τέχνη, the poetic cannot be learned, cannot be studied, and cannot be proven. The poetic can only be felt, be experienced, as the link between earth and world, between the phusical and the meta-phusical. The present (hi)story of language and being could suffer from the same misconception, and it could be (mis)read as an interpretation of the biblical text, or a model representing the history of language using a specific tradition as its source. This would be to fail to see both the source and destination of this (hi)story, and to only perceive its intermediary stage, the meta-discourse. The source of this (hi)story is the experience of the earth described in the narrative, which came to the world through *poiesis*. Its destination is also an experience: the experience of the meta-discourse concerning language, brought back to the twilight between world and earth through *meta-phor*, where the worldly can be experienced, and the earthly brought to the world. Only when it is thus experienced, rather than “read” or “studied,” can the present (hi)story of man’s house of being become meaningful, as a source and raw ore meant to be worked for the unveiling and fulfillment of the reader’s own destiny.

The present (hi)story of language and being does not pretend to represent the path that the reader must tread in order for him to reach his destination, as this destination may significantly differ from the one presented in this meta-narrative. More than an answer, or the path itself, this (hi)story rather only is an invitation to search for this path and one’s own destination. The narrative and meta-narrative may only represent stepping-stones on our journey toward the appropriation of our destiny, a sign pointing to the path rather than the path itself. The narrative is a “skillful means,” and the meta-narrative another, built on top of it. Other narratives may follow, but the narratives are only our guides toward the truth, rather than the truth itself. When one is convinced to have seized the truth is when all is lost, and

when truth is farther than ever. Different traditions may offer us different narratives, different perspectives, but it is only through an encounter between traditions that the winnowing of truth may occur, separating what elevates from what leads astray.

The surest means to winnow the truth nonetheless always remains to bring the world back to the earth, to relate it to our most primordial level of experience. One may have doubts concerning the roots and the grounding of the tradition from which the narrative sprouted, but this is of little importance when what it tells us can be directly related to our earthly and worldly life. This is especially true of the (hi)story of language and being in the narrative, that is, the meta-narrative of man's relationship with the house of being. Man's relationship with language can indeed be seen as going through all the different stages described by the meta-narrative, as language as such is identical, for both the reader and the men of the narrative. It is not only mankind as a whole that experiences such an evolution of its relationship with language. Most individual men will indeed be given the chance to personally go through the five *ek-stases* in their lifetime.

We all indeed begin our existence on the naked earth, outside language, without a worldly dwelling, living in the pure phenomenon and depending on our parents, who already dwell in a worldly shelter that allows them to sustain our earthly body while we are unable to do it ourselves. Soon in our infancy, we are all taken from the earth and thrown into a world, sheltered within a house of being whose construction was initiated by our distant forefathers. This house of being was shaped by our ancestors, but it also shaped them as well. The origin of this house, of its builders, as well as its purpose, are shrouded in mystery, and only tradition offers us a vision of what it could have been. Through man's (hi)story in the narrative, the question is nonetheless raised, and the reader is invited to search for an answer, either on the earth or in his world.

The question of the house's origin may nonetheless not be as central as the question of its nature, the nature of the facticity in which the reader himself is thrown. The city of being is very much part of our universe, even though many overlook it, and live secluded in their home, as in a prison. We are all given the opportunity to experience the second stat-ion, the encounter with

the unintelligible, which can show us the essence of our house of being, show us the fact that other people dwell in other houses, and that all these dwellings together form a larger construct. We are all at some point given sight of this “other” world, without being able to access it, but it depends on us to ask ourselves the meaning of this unintelligibility, which points out something in the nature of our house of being, and thus also of our nature as human beings.

A few years after our introduction into the house of being of our kinsmen, we are initiated to a new way to both dwell in and construct it: literacy. This new aspect of the house is more than a “technique” for the fixation of speech. When one pierces through its surface, one may realize that it is foremost a way to transcend the limitations of man’s presence. It is a way for the house, and therefore also for its dwellers, to extend their reach toward the temporally and physically distant. It shows man that he is part of something larger than the horizon of his personal experience, which is marked by presence and the locality of the world-*ego*. Seldom, however, will men consider this implication of the existence of literacy, and try to find the meaning behind the expansion of his horizon that it induces.

A large proportion of men, in their adolescence or as young adults, will also come to experience the adventure of the appropriation of the foreign, of the exploration of a new, distant house of being, which originates from a tradition different than the one of their home, and which is populated by a different people. Learning a “foreign language,” most inhabitants of the earth will embark on a worldly journey that will lead them to find a new home, a new house of being through which they will see the universe under a different light. It will shape their being, and even when the time comes for them to return to their homeland, they will bring the gift of the foreign back with them. Their journey to the foreign will show them the true nature of their home, of the house that opened up the possibility for them to *be*, from the first years of their lives. This homecoming also offers them a chance to put two worlds in tension, and it thereby raises the question of their ground, as they each provide a different outlook on the same universe. This question of the world’s ground is not one that only concerns the men of the narrative, who are the recipients of a divine law, but it is one that should concern all of us, believers, deniers, and those who

simply do not know. It is the key to man's consciousness of the way he is shaped by his dwelling and by the tradition it incarnates, which in turn will point out the question of the nature and purpose of man's being, not only as an individual *ego*, but also as peoples and as mankind as a whole.

The last stat-ion is also one that can be experienced by all readers, if they are able and willing to dim the light of their own *ego*, to extinguish the hearth burning within the house, so that the starry sky of the countr-y may appear. We are indeed all dwellers of a city of being, which has already been built for dozens or perhaps hundreds of generations. This city contains countless bridges, formed by a multitude of men who not only put the different houses of the city in tension, but also acted as mediators between them. The clash of worlds is something that is continually occurring around us, even though most will not be conscious of its nature and of what is at stake through it. The bridge-builders remain a small portion of the population, but all are nonetheless called to not only remain spectators of the play of worlds, but rather to become active players in it, men who take charge of the grounding of their world and of the edification of the city. The city's ascent may be seen as having a different goal than the one pointed out by the law within the narrative, but it will nonetheless have a goal, determined either by men or by a revelation. Perhaps more important than the determination of this goal, however, is the perception of the need for the play of worlds and the ascent toward a definite destin-ation.

Finally, the question of the end of the city, that is, the question of the finality of language and of its link with the experience of man's essential being, his destin-ation, is one that is pondered by few men, but that can nonetheless be considered an "essential" one. This question is closely intertwined with the very nature of man, as a creature that is able to be concerned with its own being and being itself, which is, one of the main characteristics distinguishing man from other living beings, together with the fact that he is endowed with the privilege of dwelling in a house of being. In the meta-narrative, it is the central question that is the key to the unfolding of man's destiny. The answer it offered is that the city, which evolved from a single house of being, is a "skillful means" guiding man toward his essential being, through a path that begins with the realization of the limits of the city, its

outer border: the wall of silence. Standing on this wall is when man can let himself be approached by what stands opposed to it, the countr-y, the counter-point to the city.

The contrast between city and countr-y, and the one between dwelling in the city and standing on the wall of silence, nevertheless do not only exist in the meta-narrative. The present (hi)story only removes the veil that conceals the existence of these contrasts, in our own lives, provided that we open ourselves up to the exploration of our own worldly facticity. The wall of silence and the countr-y are necessarily present near every place where a city stands. Language cannot exist without silence, and without a space that allows it to manifest itself. The nature of the countr-y, however, is not one that should be “investigated,” but rather one to be experienced personally. The meta-narrative only shows us the need for the search itself, rather than definitive answers. This is especially true concerning the end of the path described in this (hi)story of language and being in the biblical tradition. The determination and appropriation of man’s destiny are not to be found on pages of papers, clay tablets, or pieces of parchment, even the divinely revealed ones. It can only be found through the direct experience of each individual man, arising from a resoluteness to seek and embrace it. The meta-narrative constitutes an invitation to such an experience, and thus its exactitude is not of a primordial importance, as it is meant to be itself tried with the fire of man’s *logos* so as to draw out the dross and help man refine his awareness of himself and of his facticity.

Man may believe that the vehicle in which he lives his life is driven by the Deity, by divine being or another entity, bearing a different name. He may also believe that this vehicle is without a pilot, drifting away as a boat marooned on the ocean, and that he could himself assume its command. In each case, man will have to ask himself: *quo vadis?* What is the vehicle’s destin-ation? What is the destiny of man?

The meta-narrative that was unfolded in the present work gives one possible answer to these questions, one extracted and uncovered from the raw material that is the biblical tradition. It argues that man’s destin-ation is the appropriation of the tension between the worldly city and the countr-y beyond it, something that occurs through a meta(-)noia. It also invites the reader to

follow this path, so that he also, through his own meta(-)noia and the experience of man's essential being that it leads to, may also one day reach his destin-ation. The use of this material as a source was nonetheless far from arbitrary. The (hi)story of language and being could be told from a purely phenomenological point of view, rejecting tradition altogether, to exclusively focus on our personal experience, or the accounts of the experiences of others brought together through scientific inquiry. This, however, would not only limit man's horizon to what is present and what has been documented in the past, but it would also represent a failure to recognize that tradition is not the opposite of science, and that the benevolent welcoming of tradition is not antithetic to reason.

Tradition is not only something that should not be rejected. It is something that cannot be rejected at all, even though the realization of this fact requires an awareness of its profound nature. For the dwellers of the houses of being of the West, the biblical tradition is part of their world. It permeates their language, their vision of history, and their cultures as a whole, whether they realize or accept it or not. To open ourselves to our own tradition(s) is to open ourselves to a part of our own nature, as individual men, as peoples, and as part of mankind. Man's (hi)story could indeed be told from a purely technical point of view, but a desire to do so would imply that one has missed one of its most important aspects: the very fact that truth arises from the confrontation of opposites, which must each be given a space where they can appear. By denying tradition altogether, a man not only severs himself from his past and a part of his origin, but he also prevents the confrontation from which the truth of his being could sprout and shine, given to him to behold and embrace. This is nonetheless also true when one advocates for a supremacy of the tradition, paired with a rejection of anything that would come in its way, including our personal experience of the earth and the world. This is why the present (hi)story cannot be considered a theological work, as theology implies that one already has found and identified the truth of man's being, and that man's search is not one for the truth itself, but only one for the interpretation of the truth, given to him as revealed scripture. The essence of this (hi)story can be found in the quote that opened the first page of the present work:

It is only when man has learned to risk over and over

again all that has seemed assured, that that which is forever unknowable breaks luminously upon him. Only then can Greater Life bestow on us its light as well as its darkness, only then can Divine Being enfold, renew and transform us.⁸⁷

The quest for man's destiny thus demands that we take the risk of putting into question what has been assured by modernity: the assumption that the biblical tradition is only a *mythos*. It also demands that we also take the opposite risk, by questioning what has been assured by theology: the assumption that the tradition and the revelation are plain and infallible. Man's quest can only genuinely begin when he endeavors to occupy the interstice of indeterminacy between the opposites, when he is ready to watch and be part of their harmonious confrontation, of their dance. It is by dwelling in between the *mythos* and the *logos*, language and silence, the city and the countr-y, that man's destiny may become manifest. The essence of the narrative is the call to *metanoia*, and the essence of the meta-narrative only represents an unveiling of one of its deeper aspects: the fact that *metanoia* can be linked to *meta-noia*, the deliverance from man's fallen nature through the discovery and appropriation of the contrast between city and countr-y, the world-*ego* and divine being.

This reading of the narrative shows that the biblical tradition can be seen as sharing a common ground and a common direction with the work of modern thinkers like Heidegger and Dürckheim, and that both the ancient and the modern can be used to shed light on each other. The biblical tradition thus points out a way to follow; it invites its recipients to walk on the path toward a meta(-)noia, and not simply a metanoia. This new aspect of the biblical narrative is here revealed through the vision of the two German thinkers, showing that the discovery of man's destin-ation is still ongoing, and that it should be actively sought after, in the world and on the earth, in the tradition and in projections, rather than

⁸⁷ Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971: 81. Print; Original German: "Nur wo der Mensch das für ihn Feststehende immer wieder aufs Spiel setzt, kann das nie Feststellbare sich durchsetzen, kann das Leben uns in seinem Glanz und in seiner Finsternis berühren und das Sein erneuernd und verwandelnd in uns einschließen." From: Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Der Alltag als Übung: vom Weg zur Verwandlung*. Bern: Hans Huber, 1962: 100. Print.

simply passively received as a revelation. Man's destiny ultimately is not one that can be found in a book, but only experienced personally. Thus, once language has pointed out the way, comes the time for silence.

Bibliography

- Alighieri, Dante. “De vulgari eloquentia.” Trans. by Steven Botterill. *Dante Alighieri — Opera Omnia*. Web. 2 Nov. 2015.
- , *The Divine Comedy — Volume 3*. Ticknor and Fields, 1867. Print.
- Aloysius Lippomanus. *Catena in exodum ex auctoribus ecclesiasticis plus minus sexaginta, iisque partim Graecis, partim Latinis, connexa*. Paris, 1550. Print.
- Anttila, Raimo. *Greek and Indo-European Etymology in Action: Proto-Indo-European *aʔ-*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 2000. Print.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae: Volume 2, Existence and Nature of God: 1a. 2–11*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. Print.
- , *Summa Theologica, Part I (Prima Pars)*. Indore: Kartindo.com. Print.
- , *The Summa Theologica*. London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1917. Print.
- , *The Summa Theologica*. N.p.: Hayes Barton Press, 1952. Print.
- Aristophanes, and Marie C. Marianetti. *The Clouds: An Annotated Translation*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997. Print.
- Aristotle. *Aristotle, XIX, Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. H. Rackham. 2nd edition. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1934. Print.
- , *Physics*. Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.
- , *Physics: Books I and II*. Gloucestershire: Clarendon Press, 1983. Print.
- , “Poetics 1457b.” *Perseus*, 23 Sept. 2015.
- , “Symposium 205b-c.” *Perseus*, 23 Sept. 2015.

- , “Ἀριστοτέλους Φυσικῆς ἀκροάσεως β’.[Aristotle’s *Physics*, book II].” MIT, 22 Jan. 2016.
- Augustine, and R. P. H. Green. *De Doctrina Christiana*. Oxford University Press, 1995. Print.
- Augustine. *Augustine: Earlier Writings*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1953. Print.
- , *On Christian Doctrine*. N.p.: Liberal Arts Press, 1958. Print.
- , *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis episcopi Opera Omnia vol 3*. N.p.:n.p., 1836. Print.
- , *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera*. N.p.:Parent-Desbarres, 1839. Print.
- , *The City of God, Books VIII–XVI (The Fathers of the Church, Volume 14)*. Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2010. Print.
- , *The City of God*. Overland Park: Digireads.com Publishing, 2004. Print.
- , *The Fathers of the Church: Saint Augustine: On Genesis*. Trans. Roland J. Teske. Washington, D.C: CUA Press, 1991. Print.
- , *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Fairfield: 1st World Publishing, 2006. Print.
- Austin, John Langshaw. *How to Do Things with Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975. Print.
- Bacon, Francis, and Robertson, John M. *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*. London: Routledge, 2013. Print.
- Bacon, Francis. *Selected Philosophical Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999. Print.
- , *The New Organon or: True Directions Concerning the Interpretation of Nature*. Trans. Jonathan Bennett. N.p.:N.p. 2005. PDF.
- , *The Works of Francis Bacon*. Frommann, 1858. Print.
- , *The Works of Francis Bacon*. J. Johnson, 1803. Print.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics. 1st edition*. Minneapolis: Univ of Minnesota Press, 1984. Print.
- Barnes, Jonathan. *The Complete Works of Aristotle Volume 2*. Princeton University Press, 1991. Print.
- Beck, Edmund. *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrsers Hymnen de Paradiso und Contra Julianum*. Louvain: Peeters Publishers, 1957. Print.
- , *Des Heiligen Ephraem Des Syrsers Sermones de Fide*. Louvain:

- Peeters Publishers, 1961. Print.
- Bede, and Calvin B. Kendall. *On Genesis*. Liverpool University Press, 2008. Print.
- Bordwell, David. *Catechism of the Catholic Church Revised PB*. London: A&C Black, 2002. Print.
- Bromiley, Geoffrey W. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: A-D*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995. Print.
- Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon. Reprint edition*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994. Bibleworks.
- Buth, Randall, and R. Steven Notley. *The Language Environment of First Century Judaea: Jerusalem Studies in the Synoptic Gospels—Volume Two*. Leiden: BRILL, 2013. Print.
- Derrida, Jacques. *De la grammatologie*. Paris, Les Editions de Minuit. Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967. Print.
- , *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Corrected edition. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. Print.
- Descartes, René. *Discours de la méthode*. Foucher, 1861. Print.
- Davidson, Donald. “Objectivity and Practical Reason.” *Reasoning Practically*. Ed. Edna Ullmann-Margalit. Oxford University Press, 2000. Print.
- Dürckheim, Karlfried Graf. *Der Alltag als Übung: vom Weg zur Verwandlung*. Bern: Hans Huber, 1962. Print.
- , *Der Ruf nach dem Meister: Die Bedeutung geistiger Führung auf dem Weg zum Selbst*. Weilheim: O.W. Barth, 1972. Print.
- , *The Way of Transformation: Daily Life as a Spiritual Exercise*. Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 1971. Print.
- , *The Grace of Zen: Zen Texts for Meditation*. London: Search Press, 1977. Print.
- , *Vom doppelten Ursprung des Menschen*. Rütte: Johanna Nordländer Verlag, 2009. Print.
- , *Zen and Us*. Boston: Dutton, 1987. Print.
- , *Zen und wir*. Frankfurt: FISCHER Digital, 2016. Print.
- Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics*. Indiana University Press, 1976. Print.

- , *Opera aperta. Forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee*. Milan: Bompiani, 2013. Print.
- , *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013. Print.
- , *The Search for the Perfect Language*. Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997. Print.
- Ephraem (Syrus). *Select Works of S. Ephrem the Syrian: Translated out of the Original Syriac, with Notes and Indices*. John Henry Parker, 1847. Print.
- Ephrem. *Hymns on Paradise*. Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990. Print.
- Fant, Clyde E., and Mitchell G. Reddish. *Lost Treasures of the Bible: Understanding the Bible Through Archaeological Artifacts in World Museums*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008. Print.
- Fodor, Jerry A. *The Language of Thought*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975. Print.
- Fontanier, Pierre. *Les Figures du discours*. Paris: Flammarion, 1977. Print.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gesammelte Werke: Band 1: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010. Print.
- , *Truth and Method. 2 Revised edition*. London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2004. Print.
- Goettmann, Alphonse. *Dialogue on the Path of Initiation: An Introduction to the Life and Thought of Karlfried Graf Dürckheim*. New York: Globe Pr Books, 1991. Print.
- , *The Path of Initiation*. N.p.: Theosis Books, 2009. Print.
- Goldsmith, Steven. *Unbuilding Jerusalem: Apocalypse and Romantic Representation*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993. Print.
- Gregory (The Great). *Sancti Gregorii Pp. I magni romani pontificis homiliarum in Ezechielem prophetam libri duo — liber primus*. n.p., n.d. PDF.
- Gunnar Gunnarsson. *Jörð: Íslenzkað hefur Sigurður Einarsson*. Reykjavík: Útgáfufélagið Landnáma, 1950. Print.
- Haydock, George Leo. "Haydock's Catholic Bible Commentary, 1859 edition." *Tripod*. Web. 28 Mar. 2013.

- , *The Holy Bible; Translated from the Latin Vulgate: Diligently Compared with the Hebrew, Greek, and Other Editions in Divers Languages*. Edward Dunigan and brother, 1855. Print.
- Heidegger, Martin, and David Farrell Krell. *Basic Writings*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993. Print.
- Heidegger, Martin, and Medard Boss. *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols, Conversations, Letters*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001. Print.
- Heidegger, Martin, and Richard Rojcewicz. *Basic Concepts of Ancient Philosophy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007. Print.
- Heidegger, Martin, Richard Rojcewicz, and Daniela Vallega-Neu. *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*. Indiana University Press, 2012. Print.
- , *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*. Indiana University Press, 2009. Print.
- , *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected "Problems" of "Logic."* Indiana University Press, 1994. Print.
- , *Being and Time. Reprint edition*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008. Print.
- , *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures: Insight Into That Which Is and Basic Principles of Thinking*. Indiana University Press, 2012. Print.
- , *Country Path Conversations*. Indiana University Press, 2010. Print.
- , *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*. Amherst, N.Y: Humanity Books, 2000. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 2: Sein und Zeit (1927)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1977. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 4 Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung (1936–1968)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1981. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 5: Holzwege (1935–1946)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1977. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 6.2: Nietzsche II (1939–1946)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1997. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976.*

- Bd. 7: Vorträge und Aufsätze (1936–1953)* . Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2000. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 9: Wegmarken (1919–1961)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1976. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 10: Der Satz vom Grund (1955–1956)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1997. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 12: Unterwegs zur Sprache (1950–1959)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1985. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976. Bd. 16: Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges (1910–1976)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2000. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 41: Die Frage nach dem Ding. Zu Kants Lehre von den transzendentalen Grundsätzen (Winter semester 1935/36)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1984. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 22: Grundbegriffe der antiken Philosophie (Summer semester 1926)* . Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1993. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 34: Vom Wesen der Wahrheit. Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet (Winter semester 1931/32)* . Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1988. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 36–37: Sein und Wahrheit / 1. Die Grundfrage der Philosophie (Summer semester 1933), 2. Vom Wesen der Wahrheit (Winter semester 1933/34)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2001. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 39: Hölderlins Hymnen “Germanien” und “Der Rhein” (Winter semester 1934/35)* . Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1980. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 45: Grundfragen der Philosophie. Ausgewählte “Probleme” der “Logik” (Winter semester 1937/38)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1984. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 46: Zur Auslegung von Nietzsches II. Unzeitgemässer Betrachtung (Winter semester 1938/39)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio,

2003. Print.

- , *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 52: Hölderlins Hymne “Andenken” (Winter semester 1941/42)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1982. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 53: Hölderlins Hymne “Der Ister” (Summer semester 1942)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1984 —, *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 54: Parmenides (Winter semester 1942/43)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1982. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. II. Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1919–1944. Bd. 55: Heraklit. 1. Der Anfang des abendländischen Denkens (Summer semester 1943) / 2. Logik. Heraklits Lehre vom Logos (Summer semester 1944)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1979. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 65: Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis) (1936–1938)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1989. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 66: Besinnung (1938/39)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1997. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 69: Die Geschichte des Seyns*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1998. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 73.1: Zum Ereignis-Denken*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2013. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 77: Feldweg-Gespräche (1944/45)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1995. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 78: Der Spruch des Anaximander (1946)*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 2010. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge — Gedachtes Bd. 79: Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1994. Print.
- , *Gesamtausgabe. IV. Abteilung: Hinweise und Aufzeichnungen Bd. 97: Anmerkungen I–V (Schwarze Hefte 1942–1948)*. Frankfurt am

- Main: Klostermann, Vittorio, 1994. Print.
- , *Heidegger: Off the Beaten Track*. Cambridge University Press, 2002. Print.
- , *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister."* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996. Print.
- , *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germania" and "The Rhine."* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014. Print.
- , *Mindfulness*. London: A&C Black, 2006. Print.
- , *On the Way to Language*. New York: HarperCollins, 1982. Print.
- , *Parmenides*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. Print.
- , *Pathmarks*. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Print.
- , *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001. Print.
- , *The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013. Print.
- , *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*. New York: HarperCollins, 1982. Print.
- , *What Is a Thing?* Lanham: University Press of America, 1985. Print.
- , *Zollikoner Seminare: Protokolle — Zwiegespräche — Briefe. V.* Klostermann, 2006. Print.
- Henderson, Jeffrey. "ARISTOTLE, Metaphysics." *Loeb Classical Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 4 Dec. 2016.
- , "AUGUSTINE, The City of God against the Pagans." *Loeb Classical Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Dec. 2016.
- , "HERACLITUS, On the Universe." *Loeb Classical Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 9 Dec. 2016.
- , "PLATO, Cratylus." *Loeb Classical Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Jan. 2017.
- Hippocrates, and Heracleitus. *Hippocrates, Volume IV: Nature of Man*. Trans. W. H. S. Jones. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931. Print.
- Hofstadter, Douglas R. *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*. New York: Basic Books, 1999. Print.
- , *I Am a Strange Loop*. Reprint edition. New York: Basic Books, 2008. Print.

- Hölderlin, Friedrich, and Eric L Santner. *Hyperion and Selected Poems*. New York: Continuum, 1990: 86. Print.
- Hölderlin, Friedrich. *Hyperion*. N.p.: Tredition, 2012. Print.
- , *Poems of Friedrich Hölderlin: The Fire of the Gods Drives Us to Set Forth by Day and by Night*. San Francisco: Ithuriel's Spear, 2004. Print.
- Homerus. *Homeri Ilias*. E librariis Orphanotrophei, 1820. Print.
- Fant, Clyde E., and Mitchell G. Reddish. *Lost Treasures of the Bible: Understanding the Bible Through Archaeological Artifacts in World Museums*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008: 354. Print.
- Franz Boas. "From the Emergence of the Field to the 'Great Eskimo Vocabulary Hoax.'" *SIKU: Knowing Our Ice*. Ed. Igor Krupnik. New York City: Springer Verlag, 2010. Print.
- Jakobson, Roman. "Quest for the Essence of Language." *Diogenes* 13.51 (1965): 21–37. dio.sagepub.com. Web. 27 Oct. 2014.
- Jackson, Frank. "Epiphenomenal Qualia." *The Philosophical Quarterly* 32.127 (1982): 130. Print.
- Jensen, Alexander S. *Theological Hermeneutics*. London: SCM Press, 2012. Print.
- John Paul II. *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Reconciliatio et Paenitentia of Pope John Paul II to the Bishops, Clergy and Faithful on Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church Today*. N.p.: Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, 1984. PDF.
- Josephus, Flavius. *The Works of Flavius Josephus: Comprising the Antiquities of the Jews, a History of the Jewish Wars, and Life of Flavius Josephus, Written by Himself*. Jas. B. Smith & Company, 1854. Print.
- Karčíková, Lenka, Scot Douglass, and Johannes Zachhuber. *Gregory of Nyssa: Contra Eunomium II*. Leiden: BRILL, 2007. Print.
- Katz, J.J. "Effability and Translation." *Meaning and Translation. Philosophical and Linguistic Approaches*. Eds. F Guenther, M. Guenther Reutter. New York: New York University Press, 1978. 191–234. Print.
- Keil, Carl Friedrich. *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968. Print.
- Kemp, Gary. *Quine: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London: A&C Black, 2006. Print.

- Kierkegaard, Søren. *The Essential Kierkegaard*. Princeton University Press, 2013. Print.
- Kim, Sangkeun. *Strange Names of God: The Missionary Translation of the Divine Name and the Chinese Responses to Matteo Ricci's "Shangti" in Late Ming China, 1583–1644*. Peter Lang, 2004.
- Kipfer, Barbara Ann. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Archaeology*. New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 2000. Print.
- Koehler, Ludwig et al. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, Vol. 1*. Ed. Johann Jakob Stamm. Trans. M. E. J. Richardson. Revised ed. edition. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001. Bibleworks.
- Lakoff, George, Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green. *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. Edinburgh University Press, 2006. Print.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press, 2008. Print.
- Laozi. *Dao De Jing: The Book of the Way*. Trans. Moss Roberts. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004. Print.
- Leibniz, G. W. *Philosophical Papers and Letters: A Selection*. D. Reidel, 1969. Print.
- , *Brevis designatio meditationum de Originibus Gentium, ductis potissimum ex indicio linguarum*. N.p., 1710. Print.
- Lienhard, Joseph T. *ACCS: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. InterVarsity Press, 2014. Print.
- Louth, Andrew, ed. *Genesis 1–11 (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2016. Print.
- Lutyens, Mary. *Krishnamurti: The years of awakening*. London: John Murray, 1975: 272–274. Print.
- Maceina, A. *Tautinis Auklėjimas*. Kaunas: n.p., 1934. Print.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* University of Notre Dame Press, 1989. Print.
- Macquarrie, John. *An Existentialist Theology: A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann*. London: SCM Press, 2012. Print.
- Maironis. “Pavasario balsai.” *Lietuvių klasikinės literatūros antologija*. Web. 20 Nov. 2016.
- Martin, Francis, ed. *Acts (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)*. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2006. Print.

- Marty, François. *La bénédiction de Babel: vérité et communication*. Paris: Cerf, 1990. Print.
- Menzies, Allan. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume IX — Recently Discovered Additions to Early Christian Literature*. Cosimo, Inc., 2007. Print.
- Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*. Web. 8 Oct. 2016.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Signes*. Paris: Gallimard, 1960. Print.
- , *Signs*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964. Print.
- Michaelis, Johann David. *De l'influence des opinions sur le langage et du langage sur les opinions*. Bremen, 1762. Print.
- , *Beantwortung der Frage von dem Einfluß der Meinungen in die Sprache und der Sprache in die Meinungen*. Berlin, 1760. Print.
- Niehoff, Maren R. *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Print.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, Aaron Ridley, and Judith Norman. *Nietzsche: The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols: And Other Writings*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. Print.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Random House Publishing Group, 2009. Print.
- , *Der Wille zur Macht: Versuch einer Umwertung aller Werte*. Kröner, 1930. Print.
- , *Nietzsche: The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*. Cambridge University Press, 2001. Print.
- , *The Will to Power*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011. Print.
- Ogden, Charles Kay, I. A. Richards, and Bronislaw Malinowski. *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism*. Harcourt, Brace & World, 1923. Print.
- Orwell, George. *1984*. Plume, 2003. Print.
- Otto, Rudolf. *Das Heilige, über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und Sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen*. N.p.: 1922. Print.
- Pentecostarion*. Boston, MA: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 1990. Print.
- Philo. *The Works of Philo (Volume 2 of 4)*. Overland Park: Digireads.com Publishing, 2011. Print.

- Plato. *Complete Works*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997. Print.
- , “Phaedo 60b.” *Perseus*. Web. 23 Sept. 2015.
- Pokorny, Julius. *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Bern: Francke, 1959: 146–147. *Internet Archive*. Web. 24 Jan. 2017.
- Pope, Marvin H. *El in the Ugaritic Texts*. Brill Archive, 1955. Print.
- Poythress, Vern Sheridan. *In the Beginning Was the Word: Language: Language—A God-Centered Approach*. Crossway, 2009. Print.
- Quine, Willard Van Orman, Patricia Smith Churchland, and Dagfinn Føllesdal. *Word and Object*. MIT Press, 2013. Print.
- Reid, Thomas, and Derek R. Brookes. *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense: A Critical Edition*. Edinburgh University Press, 2000. Print.
- Ricoeur, Paul, and Richard Kearney. *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II*. Trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007. Print.
- , *Essais d’hermeneutique Vol. 2, Du texte à l’action*. Paris: Points essais, 1998. Print.
- , *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. TCU Press, 1976. Print.
- , *Métaphore vive (La)*. Le Seuil, 2013. Print.
- , *The Rule of Metaphor: The creation of Meaning in Language*. London: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- Roberts, Alexander, and Sir James Donaldson. *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: The Writings of Tertullian, Vol. 2*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1870. Print.
- Ruokanen, Miikka. *Hermeneutics as an Ecumenical Method: In the Theology of Gerhard Ebeling*. Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Society, 1982. Print.
- Safranski, Rüdiger. *Ein Meister aus Deutschland: Heidegger und seine Zeit*. München: Carl Hanser Verlag GmbH & Co, 1994. Print.
- , *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999. Print.
- Sapir, Edward. *Language*. Cambridge University Press, 2014. Print.
- Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Cours de linguistique générale*. Lausanne: Payot, 1985. Print.

- Schaff, Philip. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers First Series, St. Augustine: Gospel of John, First Epistle of John, Soliloquies*. New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007. Print.
- , *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series, Volume II St. Augustine: City of God, Christian Doctrine*. New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007. Print.
- , *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series, Volume XII St. Chrysostom*. New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007. Print.
- , *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series Volume V Gregory of Nyssa*. New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2007. Print.
- Schiller, Friedrich, and Alexander James William Morrison. *Poems of Schiller*. J. D. Williams, 1890. Print.
- Schiller, Friedrich. *Gedichte*. Grimme & Trömeļ, 1882. Print.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *Kritische Gesamtausgabe Zweite Abteilung, Band 4: Vorlesungen zur Hermeneutik und Kritik*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013. Print.
- , *Schleiermacher: Hermeneutics and Criticism: And Other Writings*. Cambridge University Press, 1998. Print.
- Schokel, Luis Alonso. *The Inspired Word: Scripture in the Light of Language and Literature*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1972. Print.
- Searle, John R. *Consciousness and Language*. Cambridge University Press, 2002. Print.
- Sears, Richards. “Etymology.” *Chinese Etymology*. Web. 4 Mar 2016.
- Sebeok, Thomas A. *I Think I Am a Verb: More Contributions to the Doctrine of Signs*. New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 1986. Print.
- Sembera, Richard. *Rephrasing Heidegger: A Companion to Being and Time*. University of Ottawa Press, 2008. Print.
- Seville, Isidore (of). *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*. E typographeo Clarendoniano, 1911. Print.
- Shan, Han. *The Surangama Sutra (Leng Yen Ching)*. New Delhi: Munshirm Manoharlal Pub, 2001. Print.
- Stassen, Manfred. *Martin Heidegger: Philosophical and Political Writings*. London: A&C Black, 2003. Print.
- Suzuki, Daisetz T. *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D. T. Suzuki*. Ed. William Barrett. Reissue edition. New York: Doubleday, 1996. Print.

The Blue Cliff Record. Shambhala Publications, 2005. Print.

Tooke, William, William Beloe, and Robert Nares. *A New and General Biographical Dictionary: Containing an Historical and Critical Account of the Lives and Writings of the Most Eminent Persons in Every Nation; Particularly the British and Irish ...* G. G. and J. Robinson, 1798. Print.

Tuttle, Hudson. *Evolution of the God and Christ Ideas*. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Pub. Co., 1906. Print.

Watts, Alan W. *The Way of Zen*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011. Print.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee. *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012. Print.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2010. Print.

Xenophon. *The Cyropædia, or Institution of Cyrus, and the Hellenics, or Grecian History*. Bohn, 1855. Print.

Yarnold, Edward. *Cyril of Jerusalem*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Zoëga, Geir T. *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2011. Print.

Бахтин, М.М. *Проблемы творчества Достоевского*. Киев: Next, 1994. PDF.

“ΤΩ ΣΑΒΒΑΤΩ ΜΕΤΑ ΤΗΝ ΠΕΝΤΗΚΟΣΤΗΝ” *Ελληνικά λειτουργικά κείμενα της ορθόδοξης εκκλησίας*. Web. 4 Apr. 2016.

כִּי חַיִּים וְכִי חַיִּים לְעוֹלָם עוֹלָמֵינוּ. Losser Holland: Bar Hebraeus Verlag. Print.

“指月錄 – 卷09.” *Wikisource*. Web. 15 Mar 2016.

久須本文雄。《禪語入門》。東京：大法輪閣，1982。

吳平。《新譯碧巖集（上）》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司，2005。

吳平。《新譯碧巖集（下）》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司，2005。

岸澤惟安。《正法眼藏全講》。東京：大法輪閣，1974。

無難，公田連太郎。《至道無難禪師集》。東京：春秋社，1956。

白隱。《白隱和尚全集》。東京：龍吟社，1935。

蔣九愚，玄覺。《新譯永嘉大師證道歌》。台北：三民書局股份有限公司，2005。

阿部吉雄。《新釈漢文大系〈7〉老子 莊子上卷》。東京：明治書院，1966。

מימון, משה בן, and שלמה בן חנוך לוי. משנה תורה הוא היר החזקה.
N.p.:N.p., 1862: 37. Print.